

STORIES OF TRAGEDY



LITTLE CLASSICS
EDITED BY
ROSSITER JOHNSON

STORIES OF
TRAGEDY



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THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE.

BY EDGAR ALLAN POE.

"What song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, although puzzling questions, are not beyond *all* conjecture."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

THE mental features discoursed of as the analytical are, in themselves, but little susceptible of analysis. We appreciate them only in their effects. We know of them, among other things, that they are always to their possessor, when inordinately possessed, a source of the liveliest enjoyment. As the strong man exults in his physical ability, delighting in such exercises as call his muscles into action, so glories the analyst in moral activity which disentangles. He derives pleasure from even the most trivial occupations bringing his talent into play. He is fond of enigmas, of conundrums, of hieroglyphics; exhibiting in his solutions of each a degree of acumen which appears to the ordinary apprehension preternatural. His results, brought about by the very soul and essence of method, have, in truth, the whole air of intuition.

The faculty of re-solution is possibly much invigorated

by mathematical study, and especially by that highest branch of it which, unjustly, and merely on account of its retrograde operations, has been called, as if *par excellence*, analysis. Yet to calculate is not in itself to analyze. A chess-player, for example, does the one, without effort at the other. It follows that the game of chess, in its effects upon mental character, is greatly misunderstood. I am not now writing a treatise, but simply prefacing a somewhat peculiar narrative by observations very much at random ; I will, therefore, take occasion to assert that the higher powers of the reflective intellect are more decidedly and more usefully tasked by the unostentatious game of draughts than by all the elaborate frivolity of chess. In this latter, where the pieces have different and *bizarre* motions, with various and variable values, what is only complex is mistaken (a not unusual error) for what is profound. The *attention* is here called powerfully into play. If it flag for an instant, an oversight is committed, resulting in injury or defeat. The possible moves being not only manifold, but involute, the chances of such oversights are multiplied ; and in nine cases out of ten, it is the more concentrative rather than the more acute player who conquers. In draughts, on the contrary, where the moves are *unique* and have but little variation, the probabilities of inadvertence are diminished, and the mere attention being left comparatively unemployed, what advantages are obtained by either party are obtained by superior *acumen*. To be less abstract : Let us suppose a game of draughts where the pieces are reduced to four kings, and where, of course, no oversight is to be expected. It is obvious that here the victory can be

decided (the players being at all equal) only by some *recherché* movement, the result of some strong exertion of the intellect. Deprived of ordinary resources, the analyst throws himself into the spirit of his opponent, identifies himself therewith, and not unfrequently sees thus, at a glance, the sole methods (sometimes indeed absurdly simple ones) by which he may seduce into error or hurry into miscalculation.

Whist has long been noted for its influence upon what is termed the calculating power; and men of the highest order of intellect have been known to take an apparently unaccountable delight in it, while eschewing chess as frivolous. Beyond doubt there is nothing of a similar nature so greatly tasking the faculty of analysis. The best chess-player in Christendom *may* be little more than the best player of chess; but proficiency in whist implies capacity for success in all these more important undertakings where mind struggles with mind. When I say proficiency, I mean that perfection in the game which includes a comprehension of *all* the sources whence legitimate advantage may be derived. These are not only manifold, but multiform, and lie frequently among recesses of thought altogether inaccessible to the ordinary understanding. To observe attentively is to remember distinctly; and, so far, the concentrative chess-player will do very well at whist; while the rules of Hoyle (themselves based upon the mere mechanism of the game) are sufficiently and generally comprehensible. Thus to have a retentive memory, and to proceed by "the book," are points commonly regarded as the sum total of good playing. But it is in matters beyond the limits of mere

rule that the skill of the analyst is evinced. He makes in silence a host of observations and inferences. So, perhaps, do his companions ; and the difference in the extent of the information obtained lies not so much in the validity of the inference as in the quality of the observation. The necessary knowledge is that of *what* to observe. Our player confines himself not at all ; nor, because the game is the object, does he reject deductions from things external to the game. He examines the countenance of his partner, comparing it carefully with that of each of his opponents. He considers the mode of assorting the cards in each hand ; often counting trump by trump, and honor by honor, through the glances bestowed by their holders upon each. He notes every variation of face as the play progresses, gathering a fund of thought from the differences in the expression of certainty, of surprise, of triumph, or chagrin. From the manner of gathering up a trick he judges whether the person taking it can make another in the suit. He recognizes what is played through feint, by the air with which it is thrown upon the table. A casual or inadvertent word ; the accidental dropping or turning of a card, with the accompanying anxiety or carelessness in regard to its concealment ; the counting of the tricks, with the order of their arrangement ; embarrassment, hesitation, eagerness, or trepidation, — all afford, to his apparently intuitive perception, indications of the true state of affairs. The first two or three rounds having been played, he is in full possession of the contents of each hand, and thenceforward puts down his cards with as absolute a precision of purpose as if the rest of the party had turned outward the faces of their own.

The analytical power should not be confounded with simple ingenuity ; for while the analyst is necessarily ingenious, the ingenious man is often remarkably incapable of analysis. The constructive or combining power, by which ingenuity is usually manifested, and to which the phrenologists (I believe erroneously) have assigned a separate organ, supposing it a primitive faculty, has been so frequently seen in those whose intellect bordered otherwise upon idiocy, as to have attracted general observation among writers on morals. Between ingenuity and the analytic ability there exists a difference far greater, indeed, than that between the fancy and the imagination, but of a character very strictly analogous. It will be found, in fact, that the ingenious are always fanciful, and the truly imaginative never otherwise than analytic.

The narrative which follows will appear to the reader somewhat in the light of a commentary upon the propositions just advanced.

Residing in Paris during the spring and part of the summer of 18—, I there became acquainted with a Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin. This young gentleman was of an excellent, indeed of an illustrious family, but, by a variety of untoward events, had been reduced to such poverty that the energy of his character succumbed beneath it, and he ceased to bestir himself in the world, or to care for the retrieval of his fortunes. By courtesy of his creditors, there still remained in his possession a small remnant of his patrimony ; and, upon the income arising from this, he managed, by means of a rigorous economy, to procure the necessities of life, without troubling himself about its superfluities. Books, in-

deed, were his sole luxuries, and in Paris these are easily obtained.

Our first meeting was at an obscure library in the Rue Montmartre, where the accident of our both being in search of the same very rare and very remarkable volume brought us into closer communion. We saw each other again and again. I was deeply interested in the little family history which he detailed to me with all that candor a Frenchman indulges whenever mere self is the theme. I was astonished, too, at the vast extent of his reading; and, above all, I felt my soul enkindled within me by the wild fervor and the vivid freshness of his imagination. Seeking in Paris the objects I then sought, I felt that the society of such a man would be to me a treasure beyond price; and this feeling I frankly confided to him. It was at length arranged that we should live together during my stay in the city; and as my worldly circumstances were somewhat less embarrassed than his own, I was permitted to be at the expense of renting, and furnishing in a style which suited the rather fantastic gloom of our common temper, a time-eaten and grotesque mansion, long deserted through superstitions into which we did not inquire, and tottering to its fall in a retired and desolate portion of the Faubourg St. Germain.

Had the routine of our life at this place been known to the world, we should have been regarded as madmen,—although, perhaps, as madmen of a harmless nature. Our seclusion was perfect. We admitted no visitors. Indeed, the locality of our retirement had been carefully kept a secret from my own former associates; and it had been many years since Dupin had ceased to know

or be known in Paris. We existed within ourselves alone.

It was a freak of fancy in my friend (for what else shall I call it?) to be enamored of the night for her own sake ; and into this *bizarrie*, as into all his others, I quietly fell ; giving myself up to his wild whims with a perfect *abandon*. The sable divinity would not herself dwell with us always ; but we could counterfeit her presence. At the first dawn of the morning we closed all the massy shutters of our old building ; lighted a couple of tapers which, strongly perfumed, threw out only the ghastliest and feeblest of rays. By the aid of these we then busied our souls in dreams, — reading, writing, or conversing, until warned by the clock of the advent of the true Darkness. Then we sallied forth into the streets, arm and arm, continuing the topics of the day, or roaming far and wide until a late hour, seeking, amid the wild lights and shadows of the populous city, that infinity of mental excitement which quiet observation can afford.

At such times I could not help remarking and admiring (although from his rich ideality I had been prepared to expect it) a peculiar analytic ability in Dupin. He seemed, too, to take an eager delight in its exercise, — if not exactly in its display, — and did not hesitate to confess the pleasure thus derived. He boasted to me, with a low chuckling laugh, that most men, in respect to himself, wore windows in their bosoms, and was wont to follow up such assertions by direct and very startling proofs of his intimate knowledge of my own. His manner at these moments was frigid and abstract ; his eyes were vacant in expression ; while his voice, usually a rich tenor,

rose into a treble which would have sounded petulantly but for the deliberateness and entire distinctness of the enunciation. Observing him in these moods, I often dwelt meditatively upon the old philosophy of the Bi-Part Soul, and amused myself with the fancy of a double Dupin,—the creative and the resolvent.

Let it not be supposed, from what I have just said, that I am detailing any mystery, or penning any romance. What I have described in the Frenchman was merely the result of an excited, or perhaps of a diseased intelligence. But of the character of his remarks at the periods in question an example will best convey the idea.

We were strolling one night down a long dirty street, in the vicinity of the Palais Royal. Being both, apparently, occupied with thought, neither of us had spoken a syllable for fifteen minutes at least. All at once Dupin broke forth with these words:—

“He is a very little fellow, that’s true, and would do better for the *Théâtre des Variétés*. ”

“There can be no doubt of that,” I replied unwittingly, and not at first observing (so much had I been absorbed in reflection) the extraordinary manner in which the speaker had chimed in with my meditations. In an instant afterward I recollect ed myself, and my astonishment was profound.

“Dupin,” said I, gravely, “this is beyond my comprehension. I do not hesitate to say that I am amazed, and can scarcely credit my senses. How was it possible you should know I was thinking of—” Here I paused, to ascertain beyond a doubt whether he really knew of whom I thought.

— “of Chantilly,” said he; “why do you pause? You were remarking to yourself that his diminutive figure unfitted him for tragedy.”

This was precisely what had formed the subject of my reflections. Chantilly was a *quondam* cobbler of the Rue St. Denis, who, becoming stage-mad, had attempted the *rôle* of Xerxes, in Crébillon’s tragedy so called, and been notoriously Pasquinaded for his pains.

“Tell me, for Heaven’s sake,” I exclaimed, “the method — if method there is — by which you have been enabled to fathom my soul in this matter.” In fact, I was even more startled than I would have been willing to express.

“It was the fruiterer,” replied my friend, “who brought you to the conclusion that the mender of soles was not of sufficient height for Xerxes *et id genus omne.*”

“The fruiterer! — you astonish me, — I know no fruiterer whomsoever.”

“The man who ran up against you as we entered the street: it may have been fifteen minutes ago.”

I now remembered that, in fact, a fruiterer, carrying upon his head a large basket of apples, had nearly thrown me down, by accident, as we passed from the Rue C—— into the thoroughfare where we stood; but what this had to do with Chantilly I could not possibly understand.

There was not a particle of *charlatanerie* about Dupin. “I will explain,” he said, “and that you may comprehend all clearly, we will first retrace the course of your meditations, from the moment in which I spoke to you until that of the *rencontre* with the fruiterer in

question. The larger links of the chain run thus,— Chantilly, Orion, Dr. Nichols, Epicurus, stereotomy, the street stones, the fruiterer."

There are few persons who have not, at some period of their lives, amused themselves in retracing the steps by which particular conclusions of their own minds have been attained. The occupation is often full of interest; and he who attempts it for the first time is astonished by the apparently illimitable distance and incoherence between the starting-point and the goal. What, then, must have been my amazement when I heard the Frenchman speak what he had just spoken, and when I could not help acknowledging that he had spoken the truth! He continued :—

" We had been talking of horses, if I remember aright, just before leaving the Rue C——. This was the last subject we discussed. As we crossed into this street, a fruiterer, with a large basket upon his head, brushing quickly past us, thrust you upon a pile of paving-stones collected at a spot where the causeway is undergoing repair. You stepped upon one of the loose fragments, slipped, slightly strained your ankle, appeared vexed or sulky, muttered a few words, turned to look at the pile, and then proceeded in silence. I was not particularly attentive to what you did; but observation has become with me, of late, a species of necessity.

" You kept your eyes upon the ground,—glancing, with a petulant expression, at the holes and ruts in the pavement (so that I saw you were still thinking of the stones), until we reached the little alley called Lamartine, which has been paved, by way of experiment, with

the overlapping and riveted blocks. Here your countenance brightened up, and perceiving your lips move, I could not doubt that you murmured the word ‘stereotomy,’ a term very affectedly applied to this species of pavement. I knew that you could not say to yourself ‘stereotomy,’ without being brought to think of atomies, and thus of the theories of Epicurus; and since, when we discussed this subject not very long ago, I mentioned to you how singularly, yet with how little notice, the vague guesses of that noble Greek had met with confirmation in the late nebular cosmogony, I felt that you could not avoid casting your eyes upward to the great *nebula* in Orion, and I certainly expected that you would do so. You did look up; and I was now assured that I had correctly followed your steps. But in that bitter *tirade* upon Chantilly, which appeared in yesterday’s *Musée*, the satirist, making some disgraceful allusions to the cobbler’s change of name upon assuming the buskin, quoted a Latin line about which we have often conversed. I mean the line,

‘*Perdidit antiquum litera prima sonum.*’

I had told you that this was in reference to Orion, formerly written Urion; and, from certain pungencies connected with this explanation, I was aware that you could not have forgotten it. It was clear, therefore, that you would not fail to combine the two ideas of Orion and Chantilly. That you did combine them I saw by the character of the smile which passed over your lips. You thought of the poor cobbler’s immolation. So far, you had been stooping in your gait; but now I saw you

draw yourself up to your full height. I was then sure that you reflected upon the diminutive figure of Chantilly. At this point I interrupted your meditations to remark that as, in fact, he *was* a very little fellow,—that Chantilly,—he would do better at the *Théâtre des Variétés*."

Not long after this, we were looking over an evening edition of the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, when the following paragraphs arrested our attention:—

"EXTRAORDINARY MURDERS.—This morning, about three o'clock, the inhabitants of the Quartier St. Roch were aroused from sleep by a succession of terrific shrieks, issuing, apparently, from the fourth story of a house in the Rue Morgue, known to be in the sole occupancy of one Madame L'Espanaye, and her daughter, Mademoiselle Camille L'Espanaye. After some delay, occasioned by a fruitless attempt to procure admission in the usual manner, the gateway was broken in with a crow-bar, and eight or ten of the neighbors entered, accompanied by two *gendarmes*. By this time the cries had ceased; but, as the party rushed up the first flight of stairs, two or more rough voices, in angry contention, were distinguished, and seemed to proceed from the upper part of the house. As the second landing was reached, these sounds, also, had ceased, and everything remained perfectly quiet. The party spread themselves, and hurried from room to room. Upon arriving at a large back chamber in the fourth story (the door of which, being found locked, with the key inside, was forced open), a spectacle presented itself which struck every one present not less with horror than with astonishment.

"The apartment was in the wildest disorder,—the furniture broken and thrown about in all directions. There was only one bedstead; and from this the bed had been removed, and thrown into the middle of the floor. On a chair lay a razor besmeared with blood. On the hearth were two or three long and thick tresses of gray human hair, also dabbled in blood, and seeming to have been pulled out by the roots. Upon the floor were found four Napoleons, an ear-ring of topaz, three large silver spoons, three smaller of *métal d'Alger*, and two bags, containing nearly four thousand francs in gold. The drawers of a bureau, which stood in one corner, were open, and had been, apparently, rifled, although many articles still remained in them. A small iron safe was discovered under the bed (not under the bedstead). It was open, with the key still in the door. It had no contents beyond a few old letters, and other papers of little consequence.

"Of Madame L'Espanaye no traces were here seen; but an unusual quantity of soot being observed in the fireplace, a search was made in the chimney, and (horrible to relate!) the corpse of the daughter, head downward, was dragged therefrom, it having been thus forced up the narrow aperture for a considerable distance. The body was quite warm. Upon examining it, many excoriations were perceived, no doubt occasioned by the violence with which it had been thrust up and disengaged. Upon the face were many severe scratches, and upon the throat dark bruises and deep indentations of finger-nails, as if the deceased had been throttled to death.

"After a thorough investigation of every portion of

the house without further discovery, the party made its way into a small paved yard in the rear of the building, where lay the corpse of the old lady, with her throat so entirely cut that, upon an attempt to raise her, the head fell off. The body, as well as the head, was fearfully mutilated, the former so much so as scarcely to retain any semblance of humanity.

"To this horrible mystery there is not as yet, we believe, the slightest clew."

The next day's paper had these additional particulars:—

"THE TRAGEDY IN THE RUE MORGUE.—Many individuals have been examined in relation to this most extraordinary and frightful affair" [the word *affaire* has not yet, in France, that levity of import which it conveys with us], "but nothing whatever has transpired to throw light upon it. We give below all the material testimony elicited.

"*Pauline Dubourg*, laundress, deposes that she has known both the deceased for three years, having washed for them during that period. The old lady and her daughter seemed on good terms,—very affectionate towards each other. They were excellent pay. Could not speak in regard to their mode or means of living. Believed that Madame L. told fortunes for a living. Was reputed to have money put by. Never met any persons in the house when she called for the clothes or took them home. Was sure that they had no servant in employ. There appeared to be no furniture in any part of the building, except in the fourth story.

"*Pierre Moreau*, tobacconist, deposes that he has

been in the habit of selling small quantities of tobacco and snuff to Madame L'Espanaye for nearly four years. Was born in the neighborhood, and has always resided there. The deceased and her daughter had occupied the house in which the corpses were found for more than six years. It was formerly occupied by a jeweller, who under-let the upper rooms to various persons. The house was the property of Madame L. She became dissatisfied with the abuse of the premises by her tenant, and moved into them herself, refusing to let any portion. The old lady was childish. Witness had seen the daughter some five or six times during the six years. The two lived an exceedingly retired life, — were reputed to have money. Had heard it said among the neighbors that Madame L. told fortunes; did not believe it. Had never seen any person enter the door except the old lady and her daughter, a porter once or twice, and a physician some eight or ten times.

"Many other persons, neighbors, gave evidence to the same effect. No one was spoken of as frequenting the house. It was not known whether there were any living connections of Madame L. and her daughter. The shutters of the front windows were seldom opened. Those in the rear were always closed, with the exception of the large back room, fourth story. The house was a good house, not very old.

"*Isidore Musèt, gendarme*, deposes that he was called to the house about three o'clock in the morning, and found some twenty or thirty persons at the gateway, endeavoring to gain admittance. Forced it open, at length, with a bayonet, — not with a crow-bar. Had but

little difficulty in getting it open, on account of its being a double or folding gate, and bolted neither at bottom nor top. The shrieks were continued until the gate was forced, and then suddenly ceased. They seemed to be screams of some person (or persons) in great agony; were loud and drawn out, not short and quick. Witness led the way up stairs. Upon reaching the first landing, heard two voices in loud and angry contention; the one a gruff voice, the other much shriller, — a very strange voice. Could distinguish some words of the former, which was that of a Frenchman. Was positive that it was not a woman's voice. Could distinguish the words *sacré* and *diabol*. The shrill voice was that of a foreigner. Could not be sure whether it was the voice of a man or of a woman. Could not make out what was said, but believed the language to be Spanish. The state of the room and of the bodies was described by this witness as we described them yesterday.

"*Henri Duval*, a neighbor, and by trade a silversmith, deposes that he was one of the party who first entered the house. Corroborates the testimony of Muset in general. As soon as they forced an entrance, they reclosed the door to keep out the crowd, which collected very fast, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour. The shrill voice, this witness thinks, was that of an Italian. Was certain it was not French. Could not be sure that it was a man's voice. It might have been a woman's. Was not acquainted with the Italian language. Could not distinguish the words, but was convinced by the intonation that the speaker was an Italian. Knew Madame L. and her daughter. Had conversed

with both frequently. Was sure that the shrill voice was not that of either of the deceased.

“—*Odenheimer, restaurateur.* This witness volunteered his testimony. Not speaking French, was examined through an interpreter. Is a native of Amsterdam. Was passing the house at the time of the shrieks. They lasted for several minutes,—probably ten. They were long and loud, very awful and distressing. Was one of those who entered the building. Corroborated the previous evidence in every respect but one. Was sure that the shrill voice was that of a man,—of a Frenchman. Could not distinguish the words uttered. They were loud and quick, unequal, spoken apparently in fear as well as in anger. The voice was harsh,—not so much shrill as harsh. Could not call it a shrill voice. The gruff voice said repeatedly, *sacré, diable*, and once *mon Dieu*.

“*Jules Mignaud*, banker, of the firm of Mignaud et Fils, Rue Deloraine. Is the elder Mignaud. Madame L’Espanaye had some property. Had opened an account with his banking-house in the spring of the year — (eight years previously). Made frequent deposits in small sums. Had checked for nothing until the third day before her death, when she took out in person the sum of 4,000 francs. This sum was paid in gold, and a clerk sent home with the money.

“*Adolphe Le Bon*, clerk to Mignaud et Fils, deposes that on the day in question, about noon, he accompanied Madame L’Espanaye to her residence with the 4,000 francs, put up in two bags. Upon the door being opened, Mademoiselle L. appeared, and took from his

hands one of the bags, while the old lady relieved him of the other. He then bowed and departed. Did not see any person in the street at the time. It is a by-street, very lonely.

"*William Bird*, tailor, deposes that he was one of the party who entered the house. Is an Englishman. Has lived in Paris two years. Was one of the first to ascend the stairs. Heard the voices in contention. The gruff voice was that of a Frenchman. Could make out several words, but cannot now remember all. Heard distinctly *sacré* and *mon Dieu*. There was a sound at the moment as if of several persons struggling,—a scraping and scuffling sound. The shrill voice was very loud,—louder than the gruff one. Is sure that it was not the voice of an Englishman. Appeared to be that of a German. Might have been a woman's voice. Does not understand German.

"Four of the above-named witnesses, being recalled, deposed that the door of the chamber in which was found the body of Mademoiselle L. was locked on the inside when the party reached it. Everything was perfectly silent,—no groans or noises of any kind. Upon forcing the door no person was seen. The windows, both of the back and front room, were down, and firmly fastened from within. A door between the two rooms was closed, but not locked. The door leading from the front room into the passage was locked, with the key on the inside. A small room in the front of the house, on the fourth story, at the head of the passage, was open, the door being ajar. This room was crowded with old beds, boxes, and so forth. These were carefully removed

and searched. There was not an inch of any portion of the house which was not carefully searched. Sweeps were sent up and down the chimneys. The house was a four-story one, with garrets (*mansardes*). A trap-door on the roof was nailed down very securely,—did not appear to have been opened for years. The time elapsing between the hearing of the voices in contention and the breaking open of the room door was variously stated by the witnesses. Some made it as short as three minutes, some as long as five. The door was opened with difficulty.

“*Alfonzo Garcio*, undertaker, deposes that he resides in the Rue Morgue. Is a native of Spain. Was one of the party who entered the house. Did not proceed up stairs. Is nervous, and was apprehensive of the consequences of agitation. Heard the voices in contention. The gruff voice was that of a Frenchman. Could not distinguish what was said. The shrill voice was that of an Englishman,—is sure of this. Does not understand the English language, but judges by the intonation.

“*Alberto Montani*, confectioner, deposes that he was among the first to ascend the stairs. Heard the voices in question. The gruff voice was that of a Frenchman. Distinguished several words. The speaker appeared to be expostulating. Could not make out the words of the shrill voice. Spoke quick and unevenly. Thinks it the voice of a Russian. Corroborates the general testimony. Is an Italian. Never conversed with a native of Russia.

“Several witnesses, recalled, here testified that the chimneys of all the rooms on the fourth story were too narrow to admit the passage of a human being. By

'sweeps' were meant cylindrical sweeping-brushes, such as are employed by those who clean chimneys. These brushes were passed up and down every flue in the house. There is no back passage by which any one could have descended while the party proceeded up stairs. The body of Mademoiselle L'Espanaye was so firmly wedged in the chimney that it could not be got down until four or five of the party united their strength.

"*Paul Dumas*, physician, deposes that he was called to view the bodies about daybreak. They were both then lying on the sacking of the bedstead in the chamber where Mademoiselle L. was found. The corpse of the young lady was much bruised and excoriated. The fact that it had been thrust up the chimney would sufficiently account for these appearances. The throat was greatly chafed. There were several deep scratches just below the chin, together with a series of livid spots which were evidently the impression of fingers. The face was fearfully discolored, and the eyeballs protruded. The tongue had been partially bitten through. A large bruise was discovered upon the pit of the stomach, produced, apparently, by the pressure of a knee. In the opinion of M. Dumas, Mademoiselle L'Espanaye had been throttled to death by some person or persons unknown. The corpse of the mother was horribly mutilated. All the bones of the right leg and arm were more or less shattered. The left *tibia* much splintered, as well as all the ribs of the left side. Whole body dreadfully bruised and discolored. It was not possible to say how the injuries had been inflicted. A heavy club of wood, or a broad bar of iron, a chair, any large, heavy, and obtuse weapon, would have pro-

duced such results, if wielded by the hands of a very powerful man. No woman could have inflicted the blows with any weapon. The head of the deceased, when seen by witness, was entirely separated from the body, and was also greatly shattered. The throat had evidently been cut with some very sharp instrument,—probably with a razor.

“*Alexandre Etienne*, surgeon, was called with M. Dumas to view the bodies. Corroborated the testimony, and the opinions of M. Dumas.

“Nothing further of importance was elicited, although several other persons were examined. A murder so mysterious, and so perplexing in all its particulars, was never before committed in Paris,—if indeed a murder has been committed at all. The police are entirely at fault,—an unusual occurrence in affairs of this nature. There is not, however, the shadow of a clew apparent.”

The evening edition of the paper stated that the greatest excitement still continued in the Quartier St. Roch; that the premises in question had been carefully researched, and fresh examinations of witnesses instituted, but all to no purpose. A postscript, however, mentioned that Adolphe Le Bon had been arrested and imprisoned, although nothing appeared to criminate him, beyond the facts already detailed.

Dupin seemed singularly interested in the progress of this affair,—at least so I judged from his manner, for he made no comments. It was only after the announcement that Le Bon had been imprisoned, that he asked me my opinion respecting the murders.

I could merely agree with all Paris in considering them

an insoluble mystery. I saw no means by which it would be possible to trace the murderer.

"We must not judge of the means," said Dupin, "by this shell of an examination. The Parisian police, so much extolled for *acumen*, are cunning, but no more. There is no method in their proceedings, beyond the method of the moment. They make a vast parade of measures; but, not unfrequently, these are so ill adapted to the objects proposed, as to put us in mind of Monsieur Jourdain's calling for his *robe-de-chambre*—*pour mieux entendre la musique*. The results attained by them are not unfrequently surprising, but, for the most part, are brought about by simple diligence and activity. When these qualities are unavailing, their schemes fail. Vidocq, for example, was a good guesser and a persevering man. But, without educated thought, he erred continually by the very intensity of his investigations. He impaired his vision by holding the object too close. He might see, perhaps, one or two points with unusual clearness, but in so doing he necessarily lost sight of the matter as a whole. Thus there is such a thing as being too profound. Truth is not always in a well. In fact, as regards the more important knowledge, I do believe that she is invariably superficial. The depth lies in the valleys where we seek her, and not upon the mountain-tops where she is found. The modes and sources of this kind of error are well typified in the contemplation of the heavenly bodies. To look at a star by glances, to view it in a sidelong way, by turning toward it the exterior portions of the *retina* (more susceptible of feeble impressions of light than the interior), is to behold the star dis-

tinctly, is to have the best appreciation of its lustre,—a lustre which grows dim just in proportion as we turn our vision *fully* upon it. A greater number of rays actually fall upon the eye in the latter case, but in the former there is the more refined capacity for comprehension. By undue profundity we perplex and enfeeble thought; and it is possible to make even Venus herself vanish from the firmament by a scrutiny too sustained, too concentrated, or too direct.

"As for these murders, let us enter into some examinations for ourselves, before we make up an opinion respecting them. An inquiry will afford us amusement" [I thought this an odd term, so applied, but said nothing], "and, besides, Le Bon once rendered me a service for which I am not ungrateful. We will go and see the premises with our own eyes. I know G——, the Prefect of Police, and shall have no difficulty in obtaining the necessary permission."

The permission was obtained, and we proceeded at once to the Rue Morgue. This is one of those miserable thoroughfares which intervene between the Rue Richelieu and the Rue St. Roch. It was late in the afternoon when we reached it, as this quarter is at a great distance from that in which we resided. The house was readily found; for there were still many persons gazing up at the closed shutters, with an objectless curiosity, from the opposite side of the way. It was an ordinary Parisian house, with a gateway, on one side of which was a glazed watch-box, with a sliding panel in the window, indicating a *loge de concierge*. Before going in, we walked up the street, turned down an alley, and then, again turning, passed

in the rear of the building, — Dupin, meanwhile, examining the whole neighborhood, as well as the house, with a minuteness of attention for which I could see no possible object.

Retracing our steps, we came again to the front of the dwelling, rang, and, having shown our credentials, were admitted by the agents in charge. We went up stairs, — into the chamber where the body of Mademoiselle L'Esparnaye had been found, and where both the deceased still lay. The disorders of the room had, as usual, been suffered to exist. I saw nothing beyond what had been stated in the *Gazette des Tribunaux*. Dupin scrutinized everything, — not excepting the bodies of the victims. We then went into the other rooms, and into the yard; a *gendarme* accompanying us throughout. The examination occupied us until dark, when we took our departure. On our way home my companion stepped in for a moment at the office of one of the daily papers.

I have said that the whims of my friend were manifold, and that *Je les ménagais*, — for this phrase there is no English equivalent. It was his humor, now, to decline all conversation on the subject of the murder, until about noon the next day. He then asked me, suddenly, if I had observed anything *peculiar* at the scene of the atrocity.

There was something in his manner of emphasizing the word "peculiar" which caused me to shudder, without knowing why.

"No, nothing *peculiar*," I said; "nothing more, at least, than we both saw stated in the paper."

"The *Gazette*," he replied, "has not entered, I

fear, into the unusual horror of the thing. But dismiss the idle opinions of this print. It appears to me that this mystery is considered insoluble, for the very reason which should cause it to be regarded as easy of solution,— I mean for the *outré* character of its features. The police are confounded by the seeming absence of motive,— not for the murder itself,— but for the atrocity of the murder. They are puzzled, too, by the seeming impossibility of reconciling the voices heard in contention, with the facts that no one was discovered up stairs but the assassinated Mademoiselle L'Espanaye, and that there were no means of egress without the notice of the party ascending. The wild disorder of the room; the corpse thrust, with the head downward, up the chimney; the frightful mutilation of the body of the old lady,— these considerations, with those just mentioned, and others which I need not mention, have sufficed to paralyze the powers, by putting completely at fault the boasted *acumen* of the government agents. They have fallen into the gross but common error of confounding the unusual with the abstruse. But it is by these deviations from the plane of the ordinary, that reason feels its way, if at all, in its search for the true. In investigations such as we are now pursuing, it should not be so much asked ‘what has occurred,’ as ‘what has occurred that has never occurred before.’ In fact, the facility with which I shall arrive, or have arrived, at the solution of this mystery, is in the direct ratio of its apparent insolubility in the eyes of the police.”

I stared at the speaker in mute astonishment.

“I am now awaiting,” continued he, looking toward

the door of our apartment, — “I am now awaiting a person who, although perhaps not the perpetrator of these butcheries, must have been in some measure implicated in their perpetration. Of the worst portion of the crimes committed, it is probable that he is innocent. I hope that I am right in this supposition; for upon it I build my expectation of reading the entire riddle. I look for the man here — in this room — every moment. It is true that he may not arrive; but the probability is that he will. Should he come, it will be necessary to detain him. Here are pistols; and we both know how to use them when occasion demands their use.”

I took the pistols, scarcely knowing what I did, or believing what I heard, while Dupin went on, very much as if in a soliloquy. I have already spoken of his abstract manner at such times. His discourse was addressed to myself; but his voice, although by no means loud, had that intonation which is commonly employed in speaking to some one at a great distance. His eyes, vacant in expression, regarded only the wall.

“That the voices heard in contention,” he said, “by the party upon the stairs, were not the voices of the women themselves, was fully proved by the evidence. This relieves us of all doubt upon the question whether the old lady could have first destroyed the daughter, and afterward have committed suicide. I speak of this point chiefly for the sake of method; for the strength of Madame L’Espanaye would have been utterly unequal to the task of thrusting her daughter’s corpse up the chimney as it was found; and the nature of the wounds upon her own person entirely precludes the idea of self-destruc-

tion. Murder, then, has been committed by some third party; and the voices of this third party were those heard in contention. Let me now advert, not to the whole testimony respecting these voices, but to what was *peculiar* in that testimony. Did you observe anything peculiar about it?"

I remarked that, while all the witnesses agreed in supposing the gruff voice to be that of a Frenchman, there was much disagreement in regard to the shrill, or, as one individual termed it, the harsh voice.

"That was the evidence itself," said Dupin, "but it was not the peculiarity of the evidence. You have observed nothing distinctive. Yet there *was* something to be observed. The witnesses, as you remark, agreed about the gruff voice; they were here unanimous. But in regard to the shrill voice, the peculiarity is, not that they disagreed, but that, while an Italian, an Englishman, a Spaniard, a Hollander, and a Frenchman attempted to describe it, each one spoke of it as that of a *foreigner*. Each is sure that it was not the voice of one of his own countrymen. Each likens it, not to the voice of an individual of any nation with whose language he is conversant, but the converse. The Frenchman supposes it the voice of a Spaniard, and 'might have distinguished some words *had he been acquainted with the Spanish.*' The Dutchman maintains it to have been that of a Frenchman; but we find it stated that, '*not understanding French, this witness was examined through an interpreter.*' The Englishman thinks it the voice of a German, and '*does not understand German.*' The Spaniard 'is sure' that it was that of an Englishman, but

'judges by the intonation' altogether, '*as he has no knowledge of the English.*' The Italian believes it the voice of a Russian, but '*has never conversed with a native of Russia.*' A second Frenchman differs, moreover, with the first, and is positive that the voice was that of an Italian; but, *not being cognizant of that tongue,* is, like the Spaniard, '*convinced by the intonation.*' Now, how strangely unusual must that voice have really been, about which such testimony as this *could* have been elicited! — in whose *tones*, even, denizens of the five great divisions of Europe could recognize nothing familiar! You will say that it might have been the voice of an Asiatic, of an African. Neither Asiatics nor Africans abound in Paris; but, without denying the inference, I will now merely call your attention to three points. The voice is termed by one witness '*harsh rather than shrill.*' It is represented by two others to have been '*quick and unequal.*' No words — no sounds resembling words — were by any witness mentioned as distinguishable.

"I know not," continued Dupin, "what impression I may have made, so far, upon your own understanding; but I do not hesitate to say that legitimate deductions even from this portion of the testimony — the portion respecting the gruff and shrill voices — are in themselves sufficient to engender a suspicion which should give direction to all further progress in the investigation of the mystery. I said '*legitimate deductions*'; but my meaning is not thus fully expressed. I designed to imply that the deductions are the *sole* proper ones, and that the suspicion arises *inevitably* from them as the single result. What the suspicion is, however, I will not say

just yet. I merely wish you to bear in mind that, with myself it was sufficiently forcible to give a definite form — a certain tendency — to my inquiries in the chamber.

"Let us now transport ourselves, in fancy, to this chamber. What shall we first seek here? The means of egress employed by the murderers. It is not too much to say that neither of us believes in preternatural events. Madame and Mademoiselle L'Espanaye were not destroyed by spirits. The doers of the deed were material, and escaped materially. Then how? Fortunately, there is but one mode of reasoning upon the point, and that mode *must* lead us to a definite decision. Let us examine, each by each, the possible means of egress. It is clear that the assassins were in the room where Mademoiselle L'Espanaye was found, or at least in the room adjoining, when the party ascended the stairs. .It is then only from these two apartments that we have to seek issues. The police have laid bare the floors, the ceilings, and the masonry of the walls, in every direction. No *secret* issues could have escaped their vigilance. But, not trusting to *their* eyes, I examined with my own. There were, then, *no* secret issues. Both doors leading from the rooms into the passage were securely locked, with the keys inside. Let us turn to the chimneys. These, although of ordinary width for some eight or ten feet above the hearths, will not admit, throughout their extent, the body of a large cat. The impossibility of egress, by means already stated, being thus absolute, we are reduced to the windows. Through those of the front room no one could have escaped without notice from the crowd in the street. The murderers *must* have passed,

then, through those of the back room. Now, brought to this conclusion in so unequivocal a manner as we are, it is not our part, as reasoners, to reject it on account of apparent impossibilities. It is only left for us to prove that these apparent ‘impossibilities’ are, in reality, not such.

“ There are two windows in the chamber. One of them is unobstructed by furniture, and is wholly visible. The lower portion of the other is hidden from view by the head of the unwieldy bedstead which is thrust close up against it. The former was found securely fastened from within. It resisted the utmost force of those who endeavored to raise it. A large gimlet-hole had been pierced in its frame to the left, and a very stout nail was found fitted therein, nearly to the head. Upon examining the other window, a similar nail was seen similarly fitted in it; and a vigorous attempt to raise this sash failed also. The police were now entirely satisfied that egress had not been in these directions. And, *therefore*, it was thought a matter of supererogation to withdraw the nails and open the windows.

“ My own examination was somewhat more particular, and was so for the reason I have just given, — because here it was, I knew, that all apparent impossibilities *must* be proved to be not such in reality.

“ I proceeded to think thus, — *à posteriori*. The murderers *did* escape from one of these windows. This being so, they could not have re-fastened the sashes from the inside, as they were found fastened, — the consideration which put a stop, through its obviousness, to the scrutiny of the police in this quarter. Yet the sashes *were* fastened. They *must*, then, have the power of fas-

tening themselves. There was no escape from this conclusion. I stepped to the unobstructed casement, withdrew the nail with some difficulty, and attempted to raise the sash. It resisted all my efforts, as I had anticipated. A concealed spring must, I now knew, exist; and this corroboration of my idea convinced me that my premises, at least, were correct, however mysterious still appeared the circumstances attending the nails. A careful search soon brought to light the hidden spring. I pressed it, and, satisfied with the discovery, forbore to upraise the sash.

"I now replaced the nail and regarded it attentively. A person passing out through this window might have reclosed it, and the spring would have caught,—but the nail could not have been replaced. The conclusion was plain and again narrowed in the field of my investigations. The assassins *must* have escaped through the other window. Supposing, then, the springs upon each sash to be the same, as was probable, there *must* be found a difference between the nails, or at least between the modes of their fixture. Getting upon the sacking of the bedstead, I looked over the head-board minutely at the second casement. Passing my hand down behind the board, I readily discovered and pressed the spring, which was, as I had supposed, identical in character with its neighbor. I now looked at the nail. It was as stout as the other, and apparently fitted in the same manner,—driven in nearly up to the head.

"You will say that I was puzzled; but, if you think so, you must have misunderstood the nature of the inductions. To use a sporting phrase, I had not been

once ‘at fault.’ The scent had never for an instant been lost. There was no flaw in any link of the chain. I had traced the secret to its ultimate result,—and that result was *the nail*. It had, I say, in every respect, the appearance of its fellow in the other window; but this fact was an absolute nullity (conclusive as it might seem to be) when compared with the consideration that here, at this point, terminated the clew. ‘There *must* be something wrong,’ I said, ‘about the nail.’ I touched it; and the head, with about a quarter of an inch of the shank, came off in my fingers. The rest of the shank was in the gimlet-hole, where it had been broken off. The fracture was an old one (for its edges were incrusted with rust), and had apparently been accomplished by the blow of a hammer, which had partially imbedded, in the top of the bottom sash, the head portion of the nail. I now carefully replaced this head portion in the indentation whence I had taken it, and the resemblance to a perfect nail was complete,—the fissure was invisible. Pressing the spring, I gently raised the sash for a few inches; the head went up with it, remaining firm in its bed. I closed the window, and the semblance of the whole nail was again perfect.

“The riddle, so far, was now unriddled. The assassin had escaped through the window which looked upon the bed. Dropping of its own accord upon his exit (or perhaps purposely closed), it had become fastened by the spring; and it was the retention of this spring which had been mistaken by the police for that of the nail,—further inquiry being thus considered unnecessary.

“The next question is that of the mode of descent.

Upon this point I had been satisfied in my walk with you around the building. About five feet and a half from the casement in question runs a lightning-rod. From this rod it would have been impossible for any one to reach the window itself, to say nothing of entering it. I observed, however, that the shutters of the fourth story were of the peculiar kind called by Parisian carpenters *ferrades*, — a kind rarely employed at the present day, but frequently seen upon very old mansions at Lyons and Bordeaux. They are in the form of an ordinary door (a single, not a folding door), except that the lower half is latticed or worked in open trellis, thus affording an excellent hold for the hands. In the present instance these shutters are fully three feet and a half broad. When we saw them from the rear of the house, they were both about half open ; that is to say, they stood off at right angles from the wall. It is probable that the police, as well as myself, examined the back of the tenement; but, if so, in looking at these *ferrades* in the line of their breadth (as they must have done), they did not perceive this great breadth itself, or, at all events, failed to take it into due consideration. In fact, having once satisfied themselves that no egress could have been made in this quarter, they would naturally bestow here a very cursory examination. It was clear to me, however, that the shutter belonging to the window at the head of the bed would, if swung fully back to the wall, reach to within two feet of the lightning-rod. It was also evident that, by exertion of a very unusual degree of activity and courage, an entrance into the window, from the rod, might have been thus effected. By

reaching to the distance of two feet and a half (we now suppose the shutter open to its whole extent) a robber might have taken a firm grasp upon the trellis-work. Letting go, then, his hold upon the rod, placing his feet securely against the wall, and springing boldly from it, he might have swung the shutter so as to close it, and, if we imagine the window open at the time, might even have swung himself into the room.

"I wish you to bear especially in mind that I have spoken of a *very* unusual degree of activity as requisite to success in so hazardous and so difficult a feat. It is my design to show you, first, that the thing might possibly have been accomplished; but, secondly and *chiefly*, I wish to impress upon your understanding the *very extraordinary*, the almost preternatural character of that agility which could have accomplished it.

"You will say, no doubt, using the language of the law, that, 'to make out my case,' I should rather undervalue than insist upon a full estimation of the activity required in this matter. This may be the practice in law, but it is not the usage of reason. My ultimate object is only the truth. My immediate purpose is to lead you to place in juxtaposition that *very unusual* activity of which I have just spoken, with that *very peculiar* shrill (or harsh) and *unequal* voice, about whose nationality no two persons could be found to agree, and in whose utterance no syllabification could be detected."

At these words a vague and half-formed conception of the meaning of Dupin flitted over my mind. I seemed to be upon the verge of comprehension, without power to comprehend, — as men, at times, find themselves upon

the brink of remembrance, without being able, in the end, to remember. My friend went on with his discourse.

" You will see," he said, " that I have shifted the question from the mode of egress to that of ingress. It was my design to convey the idea that both were effected in the same manner, at the same point. Let us now revert to the interior of the room. Let us survey the appearances here. The drawers of the bureau, it is said, had been rifled, although many articles of apparel still remained within them. The conclusion here is absurd. It is a mere guess, — a very silly one, — and no more. How are we to know that the articles found in the drawers were not all these drawers had originally contained? Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter lived an exceedingly retired life, — saw no company, — seldom went out, — had little use for numerous changes of habiliment. Those found were at least of as good quality as any likely to be possessed by these ladies. If a thief had taken any, why did he not take the best, why did he not take all? In a word, why did he abandon four thousand francs in gold to encumber himself with a bundle of linen? The gold *was* abandoned. Nearly the whole sum mentioned by Monsieur Mignaud, the banker, was discovered, in bags, upon the floor. I wish you, therefore, to discard from your thoughts the blundering idea of *motive*, engendered in the brains of the police by that portion of the evidence which speaks of money delivered at the door of the house. Coincidences ten times as remarkable as this (the delivery of the money, and murder committed within three days upon the party receiving it) happen to all of us every hour of our lives,

without attracting even momentary notice. Coincidences, in general, are great stumbling-blocks in the way of that class of thinkers who have been educated to know nothing of the theory of probabilities, — that theory to which the most glorious objects of human research are indebted for the most glorious of illustrations. In the present instance, had the gold been gone, the fact of its delivery three days before would have formed something more than a coincidence. It would have been corroborative of this idea of motive. But, under the real circumstances of the case, if we are to suppose gold the motive of this outrage, we must also imagine the perpetrator so vacillating an idiot as to have abandoned his gold and his motive together.

“ Keeping now steadily in mind the points to which I have drawn your attention, — that peculiar voice, that unusual agility, and that startling absence of motive in a murder so singularly atrocious as this, — let us glance at the butchery itself. Here is a woman strangled to death by manual strength, and thrust up a chimney, head downward. Ordinary assassins employ no such modes of murder as this. Least of all do they thus dispose of the murdered. In the manner of thrusting the corpse up the chimney, you will admit that there was something *excessively outré*; something altogether irreconcilable with our common notions of human action, even when we suppose the actors the most depraved of men. Think, too, how great must have been that strength which could have thrust the body *up* such an aperture so forcibly that the united vigor of several persons was found barely sufficient to drag it *down*!

"Turn now to other indications of the employment of a vigor most marvellous. On the hearth were thick tresses — very thick tresses — of gray human hair. These had been torn out by the roots. You are aware of the great force necessary in tearing thus from the head even twenty or thirty hairs together. You saw the locks in question as well as myself. Their roots (a hideous sight !) were clotted with fragments of the flesh of the scalp, — sure token of the prodigious power which had been exerted in uprooting perhaps half a million of hairs at a time. The throat of the old lady was not merely cut, but the head absolutely severed from the body ; the instrument was a mere razor. I wish you also to look at the *brutal* ferocity of these deeds. Of the bruises upon the body of Madame L'Espanaye I do not speak. Monsieur Dumas, and his worthy coadjutor Monsieur Etienne, have pronounced that they were inflicted by some obtuse instrument, and so far these gentlemen are very correct. The obtuse instrument was clearly the stone pavement in the yard, upon which the victim had fallen from the window which looked in upon the bed. This idea, however simple it may now seem, escaped the police, for the same reason that the breadth of the shutters escaped them, — because, by the affair of the nails, their perceptions had been hermetically sealed against the possibility of the windows having ever been opened at all.

"If now, in addition to all these things, you have properly reflected upon the odd disorder of the chamber, we have gone so far as to combine the ideas of an agility astounding, a strength superhuman, a ferocity brutal, a

butchery without motive, a *grotesquerie* in horror absolutely alien from humanity, and a voice foreign in tone to the ears of men of many nations, and devoid of all distinct or intelligible syllabification. What result, then, has ensued? What impression have I made upon your fancy?"

I felt a creeping of the flesh as Dupin asked me the question. "A madman," I said, "has done this deed; some raving maniac, escaped from a neighboring *Maison de Santé*."

"In some respects," he replied, "your idea is not irrelevant. But the voices of madmen, even in their wildest paroxysms, are never found to tally with that peculiar voice heard upon the stairs. Madmen are of some nation, and their language, however incoherent in its words, has always the coherence of syllabification. Besides, the hair of a madman is not such as I now hold in my hand. I disentangled this little tuft from the rigidly clutched fingers of Madame L'Espanaye. Tell me what you can make of it."

"Dupin," I said, completely unnerved, "this hair is most unusual; this is no *human* hair."

"I have not asserted that it is," said he; "but, before we decide this point, I wish you to glance at the little sketch I have here traced upon this paper. It is a fac-simile drawing of what has been described in one portion of the testimony as 'dark bruises, and deep indentations of finger-nails,' upon the throat of Mademoiselle L'Espanaye, and in another (by Messrs. Dumas and Etienne) as a 'series of livid spots, evidently the impression of fingers.'

" You will perceive," continued my friend, spreading out the paper upon the table before us, " that this drawing gives the idea of a firm and fixed hold. There is no *slipping* apparent. Each finger has retained, possibly until the death of the victim, the fearful grasp by which it originally embedded itself. Attempt now to place all your fingers, at the same time, in the respective impressions as you see them."

I made the attempt in vain.

" We are possibly not giving this matter a fair trial," he said. " The paper is spread out upon a plane surface; but the human throat is cylindrical. Here is a billet of wood, the circumference of which is about that of the throat. Wrap the drawing around it, and try the experiment again."

I did so; but the difficulty was even more obvious than before. " This," I said, " is the mark of no human hand."

" Read now," replied Dupin, " this passage from Cuvier."

It was a minute anatomical and generally descriptive account of the large fulvous Ourang-Outang of the East Indian Islands. The gigantic stature, the prodigious strength and activity, the wild ferocity, and the imitative propensities of these mammalia are sufficiently well known to all. I understood the full horrors of the murder at once.

" The description of the digits," said I, as I made an end of reading, " is in exact accordance with this drawing. I see that no animal but an Ourang-Outang of the species here mentioned could have impressed the indentations as you have traced them. This tuft of tawny

hair, too, is identical in character with that of the beast of Cuvier. But I cannot possibly comprehend the particulars of this frightful mystery. Besides, there were *two* voices heard in contention, and one of them was unquestionably the voice of a Frenchman."

"True; and you will remember an expression attributed almost unanimously, by the evidence, to this voice, — the expression *mon Dieu!* This, under the circumstances, has been justly characterized by one of the witnesses (Montani, the confectioner) as an expression of remonstrance or expostulation. Upon these two words, therefore, I have mainly built my hopes of a full solution of the riddle. A Frenchman was cognizant of the murder. It is possible, indeed it is far more than probable, that he was innocent of all participation in the bloody transactions which took place. The Ourang-Outang may have escaped from him. He may have traced it to the chamber; but, under the agitating circumstances which ensued, he could never have recaptured it. It is still at large. I will not pursue these guesses, — for I have no right to call them more, — since the shades of reflection upon which they are based are scarcely of sufficient depth to be appreciable by my own intellect, and since I could not pretend to make them intelligible to the understanding of another. We will call them guesses, then, and speak of them as such. If the Frenchman in question is indeed, as I suppose, innocent of this atrocity, this advertisement, which I left last night, upon our return home, at the office of *Le Monde* (a paper devoted to the shipping interest, and much sought by sailors), will bring him to our residence."

He handed me a paper, and I read thus :—

CAUGHT.—*In the Bois de Boulogne, early in the morning of the — inst. (the morning of the murder), a very large, tawny Ourang-Outang of the Bornese species. The owner (who is ascertained to be a sailor belonging to a Maltese vessel) may have the animal again, upon identifying it satisfactorily, and paying a few charges arising from its capture and keeping. Call at No. —, Rue —, Faubourg St. Germain,—au troisième.*

"How was it possible," I asked, "that you should know the man to be a sailor, and belonging to a Maltese vessel?"

"I do not know it," said Dupin. "I am not *sure* of it. Here, however, is a small piece of ribbon, which from its form, and from its greasy appearance, has evidently been used in tying the hair in one of those long *queues* of which sailors are so fond. Moreover, this knot is one which few besides sailors can tie, and is peculiar to the Maltese. I picked the ribbon up at the foot of the lightning-rod. It could not have belonged to either of the deceased. Now if, after all, I am wrong in my induction from this ribbon, that the Frenchman was a sailor belonging to a Maltese vessel, still I can have done no harm in saying what I did in the advertisement. If I am in error, he will merely suppose that I have been misled by some circumstance into which he will not take the trouble to inquire. But if I am right, a great point is gained. Cognizant although innocent of the murder, the Frenchman will naturally hesitate about replying to the advertisement,—about demanding the

Ourang-Outang. He will reason thus : ‘I am innocent ; I am poor ; my Ourang-Outang is of great value,— to one in my circumstances a fortune of itself,— why should I lose it through idle apprehensions of danger ? Here it is, within my grasp. It was found in the Bois de Boulogne,— at a vast distance from the scene of that butchery. How can it ever be suspected that a brute beast should have done the deed ? The police are at fault,— they have failed to procure the slightest clew. Should they even trace the animal, it would be impossible to prove me cognizant of the murder, or to implicate me in guilt on account of that cognizance. Above all, *I am known*. The advertiser designates me as the possessor of the beast. I am not sure to what limit his knowledge may extend. Should I avoid claiming a property of so great value, which it is known that I possess, it will render the animal, at least, liable to suspicion. It is not my policy to attract attention either to myself or to the beast. I will answer the advertisement, get the Ourang-Outang, and keep it close until this matter has blown over.’”

At this moment we heard a step upon the stairs.

“ Be ready,” said Dupin, “ with your pistols, but neither use them nor show them until at a signal from myself.”

The front door of the house had been left open, and the visitor had entered, without ringing, and advanced several steps upon the staircase. Now, however, he seemed to hesitate. Presently we heard him descending. Dupin was moving quickly to the door, when we again heard him coming up. He did not turn back a second

time, but stepped up with decision, and rapped at the door of our chamber.

"Come in," said Dupin, in a cheerful and hearty tone.

A man entered. He was a sailor, evidently,—a tall, stout, and muscular-looking person, with a certain dare-devil expression of countenance, not altogether unprepossessing. His face, greatly sunburnt, was more than half hidden by whisker and *mustachio*. He had with him a huge oaken cudgel, but appeared to be otherwise unarmed. He bowed awkwardly, and bade us "good evening," in French accents, which, although somewhat Neufchatelish, were still sufficiently indicative of a Parisian origin.

"Sit down, my friend," said Dupin. "I suppose you have called about the Ourang-Outang. Upon my word, I almost envy you the possession of him,—a remarkably fine, and no doubt a very valuable animal. How old do you suppose him to be?"

The sailor drew a long breath, with the air of a man relieved of some intolerable burden, and then replied, in an assured tone,—

"I have no way of telling, but he can't be more than four or five years old. Have you got him here?"

"O no; we had no conveniences for keeping him here. He is at a livery stable in the Rue Dubourg, just by. You can get him in the morning. Of course you are prepared to identify the property?"

"To be sure I am, sir."

"I shall be sorry to part with him," said Dupin.

"I don't mean that you should be at all this trouble

for nothing, sir," said the man. "Could n't expect it. Am very willing to pay a reward for the finding of the animal, — that is to say, anything in reason."

"Well," replied my friend, "that is all very fair, to be sure. Let me think! — what should I have? Oh! I will tell you. My reward shall be this. You shall give me all the information in your power about these murders in the Rue Morgue."

Dupin said the last words in a very low tone, and very quietly. Just as quietly, too, he walked toward the door, locked it, and put the key into his pocket. He then drew a pistol from his bosom and placed it, without the least flurry, upon the table.

The sailor's face flushed up as if he were struggling with suffocation. He started to his feet and grasped his cudgel; but the next moment he fell back into his seat, trembling violently, and with the countenance of death itself. He spoke not a word. I pitied him from the bottom of my heart.

"My friend," said Dupin, in a kind tone, "you are alarming yourself unnecessarily, — you are indeed. We mean you no harm whatever. I pledge you the honor of a gentleman, and of a Frenchman, that we intend you no injury. I perfectly well know that you are innocent of the atrocities in the Rue Morgue. It will not do, however, to deny that you are in some measure implicated in them. From what I have already said, you must know that I have had means of information about this matter, — means of which you could never have dreamed. Now the thing stands thus. You have done nothing which you could have avoided, — nothing, cer-

tainly, which renders you culpable. You were not even guilty of robbery, when you might have robbed with impunity. You have nothing to conceal. You have no reason for concealment. On the other hand, you are bound by every principle of honor to confess all you know. An innocent man is now imprisoned, charged with that crime of which you can point out the perpetrator."

The sailor had recovered his presence of mind, in a great measure, while Dupin uttered these words ; but his original boldness of bearing was all gone.

"So help me God," said he, after a brief pause, "I *will* tell you all I know about this affair ; but I do not expect you to believe one half I say, — I would be a fool indeed if I did. Still, I *am* innocent, and I will make a clean breast if I die for it."

What he stated was, in substance, this. He had lately made a voyage to the Indian Archipelago. A party, of which he formed one, landed at Borneo, and passed into the interior on an excursion of pleasure. He and a companion had captured the Ourang-Outang. This companion dying, the animal fell into his own exclusive possession. After great trouble, occasioned by the intractable ferocity of his captive during the home voyage, he at length succeeded in lodging it safely at his own residence in Paris, where, not to attract toward himself the unpleasant curiosity of his neighbors, he kept it carefully secluded, until such time as it should recover from a wound in the foot, received from a splinter on board ship. His ultimate design was to sell it.

Returning home from some sailors' frolic on the night,

or rather in the morning, of the murder, he found the beast occupying his own bedroom, into which it had broken from a closet adjoining, where it had been, as was thought, securely confined. Razor in hand and fully lathered, it was sitting before a looking-glass, attempting the operation of shaving, in which it had no doubt previously watched its master through the keyhole of the closet. Terrified at the sight of so dangerous a weapon in the possession of an animal so ferocious, and so well able to use it, the man for some moments was at a loss what to do. He had been accustomed, however, to quiet the creature, even in its fiercest moods, by the use of the whip, and to this he now resorted. Upon sight of it, the Ourang-Outang sprang at once through the door of the chamber, down the stairs, and thence, through a window, unfortunately open, into the street.

The Frenchman followed in despair, the ape, razor still in hand, occasionally stopping to look back and gesticulate at its pursuer, until the latter had nearly come up with it. It then again made off. In this manner the chase continued for a long time. The streets were profoundly quiet, as it was nearly three o'clock in the morning. In passing down an alley in the rear of the Rue Morgue, the fugitive's attention was arrested by a light gleaming from the open window of Madame L'Espanaye's chamber, in the fourth story of her house. Rushing to the building, it perceived the lightning-rod, clambered up with inconceivable agility, grasped the shutter, which was thrown fully back against the wall, and, by its means, swung itself directly upon the head-board of the bed. The whole feat did not occupy a

minute. The shutter was kicked open again by the Ourang-Outang as it entered the room.

The sailor, in the mean time, was both rejoiced and perplexed. He had strong hopes of now recapturing the brute, as it could scarcely escape from the trap into which it had ventured, except by the rod, where it might be intercepted as it came down. On the other hand, there was much cause for anxiety as to what it might do in the house. This latter reflection urged the man still to follow the fugitive. A lightning-rod is ascended without difficulty, especially by a sailor; but, when he had arrived as high as the window, which lay far to his left, his career was stopped; the most that he could accomplish was to reach over so as to obtain a glimpse of the interior of the room. At this glimpse he nearly fell from his hold through excess of horror. Now it was that those hideous shrieks arose upon the night, which had startled from slumber the inmates of the Rue Morgue. Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter, habited in their night-clothes, had apparently been occupied in arranging some papers in the iron chest already mentioned, which had been wheeled into the middle of the room. It was open, and its contents lay beside it on the floor. The victims must have been sitting with their backs toward the window; and, from the time elapsing between the ingress of the beast and the screams, it seems probable that it was not immediately perceived. The flapping-to of the shutter would naturally have been attributed to the wind.

As the sailor looked in, the gigantic animal had seized Madame L'Espanaye by the hair (which was loose, as

she had been combing it) and was flourishing the razor about her face, in imitation of the motions of a barber. The daughter lay prostrate and motionless; she had swooned. The screams and struggles of the old lady (during which the hair was torn from her head) had the effect of changing the probably pacific purposes of the Ourang-Outang into those of wrath. With one determined sweep of its muscular arm it nearly severed her head from her body. The sight of blood inflamed its anger into frenzy. Gnashing its teeth, and flashing fire from its eyes, it flew upon the body of the girl, and embedded its fearful talons in her throat, retaining its grasp until she expired. Its wandering and wild glances fell at this moment upon the head of the bed, over which the face of its master, rigid with horror, was just discernible. The fury of the beast, which no doubt bore still in mind the dreaded whip, was instantly converted into fear. Conscious of having deserved punishment, it seemed desirous of concealing its bloody deeds, and skipped about the chamber in an agony of nervous agitation, throwing down and breaking the furniture as it moved, and dragging the bed from the bedstead. In conclusion, it seized first the corpse of the daughter, and thrust it up the chimney, as it was found; then that of the old lady, which it immediately hurled through the window headlong.

As the ape approached the casement with its mutilated burden, the sailor shrank aghast to the rod, and, rather gliding than clambering down it, hurried at once home, — dreading the consequences of the butchery, and gladly abandoning, in his terror, all solicitude about the fate

of the Ourang-Outang. The words heard by the party upon the staircase were the Frenchman's exclamations of horror and affright, commingled with the fiendish jabberings of the brute.

I have scarcely anything to add. The Ourang-Outang must have escaped from the chamber, by the rod, just before the breaking of the door. It must have closed the window as it passed through it. It was subsequently caught by the owner himself, who obtained for it a very large sum at the *Jardin des Plantes*. Le Bon was instantly released, upon our narration of the circumstances (with some comments from Dupin) at the bureau of the Prefect of Police. This functionary, however well disposed to my friend, could not altogether conceal his chagrin at the turn which affairs had taken, and was fain to indulge in a sarcasm or two, about the propriety of every person's minding his own business.

"Let him talk," said Dupin, who had not thought it necessary to reply. "Let him discourse; it will ease his conscience. I am satisfied with having defeated him in his own castle. Nevertheless, that he failed in the solution of this mystery is by no means that matter for wonder which he supposes it; for, in truth, our friend the Prefect is somewhat too cunning to be profound. In his wisdom is no *stamen*. It is all head and no body, like the pictures of the goddess Laverna; or, at best, all head and shoulders, like a codfish. But he is a good creature after all. I like him especially for one master stroke of cant, by which he has attained his reputation for ingenuity. I mean the way he has *de nier ce qui est, et d'expliquer ce qui n'est pas.*"



THE LAUSON TRAGEDY.

BY J. W. DEFOREST.

CUPID and Psyche! The young man and the young woman who are in love with each other! The couple which is constantly vanishing and constantly reappearing; which has filled millions of various situations, and yet is always the same; symbolizing, and one might almost say embodying, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls; acting a drama of endless repetitions, with innumerable spectators!

What would the story-reading world — yes, and what would the great world of humanity — do without these two figures? They are more lasting, they are more important, and they are more fascinating than even the crowned and laurelled images of heroes and sages. When men shall have forgotten Alexander and Socrates, Napoleon and Humboldt, they will still gather around this imperishable group, the youth and the girl who are in love. Without them our kind would cease to be; at one time or another we are all of us identified with them in spirit; thus both reason and sympathy cause us to be interested in their million-fold repeated story.

We have the two before us. The girl, dark and dark-eyed, with Oriental features, and an expression which one is tempted to describe by some such epithet as imperial, is Bessie Barron, the orphan granddaughter of Squire Thomas Lauson of Barham, in Massachusetts. The youth, pale, chestnut-haired, and gray-eyed, with a tall and large and muscular build, is Henry Foster, not more than twenty-seven years old, yet already a professor in the scientific department of the university of Hampstead. They are standing on the edge of a rocky precipice some seventy feet in depth, from the foot of which a long series of grassy slopes descends into a wide, irregular valley, surrounded by hills that almost deserve the name of mountains. In the distance there are villages, the nearest fully visible even to its most insignificant buildings, others showing only a few white gleams through the openings of their elms, and others still distinguishable by merely a spire.

There has been talk such as affianced couples indulge in; we must mention this for the sake of truth, and we must omit it in mercy. "Lovers," declares a critic who has weight with us, "are habitually insipid, at least to us married people." It was a man who said that; no woman, it is believed, could utter such a condemnation of her own heart: no woman ever quite loses her interest in the drama of love-making. But out of regard to such males as have drowned their sentimentality in marriage we will, for the present, pass over the words of tenderness and devotion, and only listen when Professor Foster becomes philosophical.

"What if I should throw myself down here?" said

Bessie Barron, after a long look over the precipice, meanwhile holding fast to a guardian arm.

"You would commit suicide," was the reply of a man whom we must admit to have been accurately informed concerning the nature of actions like the one specified.

Slightly disappointed at not hearing the appeal, "O my darling, don't think of such a thing!" Bessie remained silent a moment, wondering if she were silly or he cold-hearted. Did she catch a glimmering of the fact that men do not crave small sensations as women do, and that the man before her was a specially rational being because he had been trained in the sublime logic of the laws of nature? Doubtful: the two sexes are profoundly unlike in mental action; they must study each other long before they can fully understand each other.

"I suppose I should be dreadfully punished for it," she went on, her thoughts turning to the world beyond death, that world which trembling faith sees, and which is, therefore, visible to woman.

"I am not sure," boldly admitted the Professor, who had been educated in Germany.

In order to learn something of the character of this young man, we must permit him to jabber his nondescript ideas for a little, even though we are thereby stumbled and wearied.

"Not sure?" queried Bessie. "How do you mean? Don't you think suicide sinful? Don't you think sin will be punished?"

She spoke with eagerness, dreading to find her lover

not orthodox,—a woful stigma in Barham on lovers, and indeed on all men whatever.

"Admitting thus much, I don't know how far you would be a free agent in the act," lectured the philosopher. "I don't know where free agency begins or ends. Indeed, I am so puzzled by this question as to doubt whether there is such a condition as free agency."

"No such thing as free agency?" wondered Bessie.
"Then what?"

"See here. Out of thirty-eight millions of Frenchmen a fixed number commit suicide every year. Every year just so many Frenchmen out of a million kill themselves. Does that look like free agency, or does it look like some unknown influence, some general rule of depression, some law of nature, which affects Frenchmen, and which they cannot resist? The individual seems to be free, at every moment of his life, to do as he chooses. But what leads him to choose? Born instincts, conditions of health, surroundings, circumstances. Do not the circumstances so govern his choice that he cannot choose differently? Moreover, is he really an individual? Or is he only a fraction of a great unity, the human race, and directed by its current? We speak of a drop of water as if it were an individuality; but it cannot swim against the stream to which it belongs; it is not free. Is not the individual man in the same condition? There are questions there which I cannot answer; and until I can answer them I cannot answer your question."

We have not repeated without cause these bold and crude speculations. It is necessary to show that Foster

was what was called in Barham a free-thinker, in order to account for efforts which were made to thwart his marriage with Bessie Barron, and for prejudices which aided to work a stern drama into his life.

The girl listened and pondered. She tried to follow her lover over the seas of thought upon which he walked; but the venture was beyond her powers, and she returned to the pleasant firm land of a subject nearer her heart.

"Are you thinking of me?" she asked in a low tone, and with an appealing smile.

"No," he smiled back. "I must own that I was not. But I ought to have been. I do think of you a great deal."

"More than I deserve?" she queried, still suspicious that she was not sufficiently prized to satisfy her longings for affection.

He laughed outright. "No, not more than you deserve; not as much as you deserve; you deserve a great deal. How many times are you going to ask me these questions?"

"Every day. A hundred times a day. Shall you get tired of them?"

"Of course not. But what does it mean? Do you doubt me?"

"No. But I want to hear you say that you think of me, over and over again. It gives me such pleasure to hear you say it! It is such a great happiness that it seems as if it were my only happiness."

Before Bessie had fallen in love with Foster, and especially before her engagement to him, there had been a time when she had talked more to the satisfaction of the male critic. But now her whole soul was absorbed in

the work of loving. She had no thought for any other subject ; none, at least, while with *him*. Her whole appearance and demeanor shows how completely she is occupied by this master passion of woman. A smile seems to exhale constantly from her face ; if it is not visible on her lips, nor, indeed, anywhere, still you perceive it ; if it is no more to be seen than the perfume^{*} of a flower, still you are conscious of it. It is no figurative exaggeration to say that there is within her soul an incessant music, like that of waltzes, and of all sweet, tender, joyous melodies. If you will watch her carefully, and if you have the delicate senses of sympathy, you also will hear it.

Are we wrong in declaring that the old, old story of clinging hearts is more fascinating from age to age, as human thoughts become purer and human feelings more delicate ? We believe that love, like all other things earthly, is subject to the progresses of the law of evolution, and grows with the centuries to be a more various and exquisite source of happiness. This girl is more in love than her grandmother, who made butter and otherwise wrought laboriously with her own hands, had ever found it possible to be. An organization refined by the manifold touch of high civilization, an organization brought to the keenest sensitiveness by poetry and fiction and the spiritualized social breath of our times, an organization in which muscle is lacking and nerve over-abundant, she is capable of an affection which has the wings of imagination, which can soar above the ordinary plane of belief, which is more than was once human.

Consider for an instant what an elaboration of culture

the passion of love may have reached in this child. She can invest the man whom she has accepted as monarch of her soul with the perfections of the heroes of history and of fiction. She can prophesy for him a future which a hundred years since was not realizable upon this continent. Out of her own mind she can draw shining raiment of success for him which shall be visible across oceans, and crowns of fame which shall not be dimmed by centuries. She can love him for superhuman loveliness which she has power to impute to him, and for victories which she is magician enough to strew in anticipation beneath his feet. It is not extravagance, it is even nothing but the simplest and most obvious truth, to say that there have been periods in the world's history, without going back to the cycles of the troglodyte and the lake-dweller, when such love would have been beyond the capabilities of humanity.

It must be understood, by the way, that Bessie was not bred amid the sparse, hard-worked, and scantily cultured population of Barham, and that, until the death of her parents, two years before the opening of this story, she had been a plant of the stimulating, hot-bed life of a city. Into this bucolic land she had brought susceptibilities which do not often exist there, and a craving for excitements of sentiment which does not often find gratification there. Consequently the first youth who in any wise resembled the ideal of manhood which she had set up in her soul found her ready to fall into his grasp, to believe in him as in a deity, and to look to him for miracles of love and happiness.

Well, these two interesting idiots, as the unsympathiz-

ing observer might call them, have turned their backs on the precipice and are walking toward the girl's home. They had not gone far before Bessie uttered a speech which excited Harry's profound amazement, and which will probably astonish every young man who has not as yet made his conquests. After looking at him long and steadfastly, she said : "How is it possible that you can care for me? I don't see what you find in me to make me worthy of your admiration."

How often such sentiments have been felt, and how often also they have been spoken, by beings whose hearts have been bowed by the humility of strong affection! Perhaps women are less likely to give them speech than men; but it is only because they are more trammelled by an education of reserve, and by inborn delicacy and timidity; it is not because they feel them less. This girl, however, was so frank in nature, and so earnest and eager in her feelings, that she could not but give forth the aroma of loving meekness that was in her soul.

"What do you mean?" asked Foster, in his innocent surprise. "See nothing to admire in *you*!"

"O, you are so much wiser than I, and so much nobler!" she replied. "It is just because you are good, because you have the best heart that ever was, that you care for me. You found me lonely and unhappy, and so you pitied me and took charge of me."

"O no!" he began; but we will not repeat his protestations; we will just say that he, too, was properly humble.

"Have you really been lonely and sad?" he went on, curious to know every item of her life, every beat of her heart.

"Does that old house look like a paradise to you?" she asked, pointing to the dwelling of Squire Lauson.

"It is n't very old, and it does n't look very horrible," he replied, a little anxious as he thought of his future housekeeping. "Perhaps ours will not be so fine a one."

"I was not thinking of that," declared Bessie. "*Our* house will be charming, even if it has but one story, and that under ground. But *this* one! You don't see it with my eyes; you have n't lived in it."

"Is it haunted?" inquired Foster, of whom we must say that he did not believe in ghosts, and, in fact, scorned them with all the scorn of a philosopher.

"Yes, and by people who are not yet buried,—people who call themselves alive."

The subject was a delicate one probably, for Bessie said no more concerning it, and Foster considerably refrained from further questions. There was one thing on which this youth especially prided himself, and that was on being a gentleman in every sense possible to a republican. Because his father had been a judge, and his grandfather and great-grandfather clergymen, he conceived that he belonged to a patrician class, similar to that which Englishmen style "the untitled nobility," and that he was bound to exhibit as many chivalrous virtues as if his veins throbbed with the blood of the Black Prince. Although not combative, and not naturally reckless of pain and death, he would have faced Heenan and Morrissey together in fight, if convinced that his duty as a gentleman demanded it. Similarly he felt himself obliged "to do the handsome thing" in money matters;

to accept, for instance, without haggling, such a salary as was usual in his profession ; to be as generous to waiters as if he were a millionaire. Furthermore, he must be magnanimous to all that great multitude who were his inferiors, and particularly must he be fastidiously decorous and tender in his treatment of women. All these things he did or refrained from doing, not only out of good instincts towards others, but out of respect for himself.

On the whole, he was a worthy and even admirable specimen of the genus young man. No doubt he was conceited ; he often offended people by his bumptiousness of opinion and hauteur of manner ; he rather depressed the human race by the severity with which he classed this one and that one as “no gentleman,” because of slight defects in etiquette ; he considerably amused older and wearier minds by the confidence with which he settled vexed questions of several thousand years’ standing ; but with all these faults, he was a better and wiser and more agreeable fellow than one often meets at his age ; he was a youth whom man could respect and woman adore. To noble souls it must be agreeable, I think, to see him at the present moment, anxious to know precisely what sorrows had clouded the life of his betrothed in the old house before him, and yet refraining from questioning her on the alluring subject, “because he was a gentleman.”

The house itself kept its secret admirably. It had not a signature of character about it ; it was as non-committal as an available candidate for the Presidency ; it exhibited the plain, unornamental, unpoetic reserve of a

Yankee Puritan. Whether it were a stage for comedy or tragedy, whether it were a palace for happy souls or a prison for afflicted ones, it gave not even a darkling hint.

A sufficiently spacious edifice, but low of stature and with a long slope of back roof, it reminded one of a stocky and round-shouldered old farmer, like those who daily trudged by it to and from the market of Hampstead, hawing and geeing their fat cattle with lean, hard voices. A front door, sheltered by a small portico, opened into a hall which led straight through the building, with a parlor and bedroom on one side, and a dining-room and kitchen on the other. In the rear was a low wing serving as wash-house, lumber-room, and wood-shed. The white clapboards and green blinds were neither freshly painted nor rusty, but just sedately weather-worn. The grounds, the long woodpiles, the barn and its adjuncts, were all in that state of decent slovenliness which prevails amid the more rustic farming population of New England. On the whole, the place looked like the abode of one who had made a fair fortune by half a century or more of laborious and economical though not enlightened agriculture.

"I must leave you now," said Foster, when the two reached the gate of the "front-yard"; "I must get back to my work in Hampstead."

"And you won't come in for a minute?" pleaded Bessie.

"You know that I would be glad to come in and stay in for ever and ever. It seems now as if life were made for nothing but talking to you. But my fellow-men no

doubt think differently. There are such things as lectures, and I must prepare a few of them. I really have pressing work to do."

What he furthermore had in his mind was, "I am bound as a gentleman to do it"; but he refrained from saying that: he was conscious that he sometimes said it too much; little by little he was learning that he was bumptious, and that he ought not to be.

"And you will come to-morrow?" still urged Bessie, grasping at the next best thing to to-day.

"Yes, I shall walk out. This driving every day won't answer, on a professor's salary," he added, swelling his chest over this grand confession of poverty. "Besides, I need the exercise."

"How good of you to walk so far merely to see me!" exclaimed the humble little beauty.

Until he came again she brooded over the joys of being his betrothed, and over the future, the far greater joy of being his wife. Was not this high hope in love, this confidence in the promises of marriage, out of place in Bessie? She has daily before her, in the mutual sayings and doings of her grandfather and his spouse, a woful instance of the jarring way in which the chariot-wheels of wedlock may run. Squire Tom Lauson does not get on angelically with his second wife. It is reported that she finds existence with him the greatest burden that she has ever yet borne, and that she testifies to her disgust with it in a fashion which is at times startlingly dramatic. If we arrive at the Lauson house on the day following the dialogue which has been reported, we shall witness one of her most effective exhibitions.

It is raining violently; an old-fashioned blue-light Puritan thunder-storm is raging over the Barham hills; the blinding flashes are instantaneously followed by the deafening peals; the air is full of sublime terror and danger. But to Mrs. Squire Lawson the tempest is so far from horrible that it is even welcome, friendly, and alluring, compared with her daily showers of conjugal misery. She has just finished one of those frequent contests with her husband, which her sickly petulance perpetually forces her to seek, and which nevertheless drive her frantic. In her wild, yet weak rage and misery, death seems a desirable refuge. Out of the open front door she rushes, out into the driving rain and blinding lightning, lifts her hands passionately toward Heaven, and prays for a flash to strike her dead.

After twice shrieking this horrible supplication, she dropped her arms with a gesture of sullen despair, and stalked slowly, reeking wet, into the house. In the hall, looking out upon this scene of demoniacal possession, sat Bessie Lauson and her maiden aunt, Miss Mercy Lauson, while behind them, coming from an inner room, appeared the burly figure of the old Squire. As Mrs. Lauson passed the two women, they drew a little aside with a sort of shrinking which arose partly from a desire to avoid her dripping garments, and partly from that awe with which most of us regard ungovernable passion. The Squire, on the contrary, met his wife with a sarcastic twinkle of his grim gray eyes, and a scoff which had the humor discoverable in the contrast between total indifference and furious emotion.

“Closed your camp-meeting early, Mrs. Lauson,” said

the old man ; " can't expect a streak of lightning for such a short service."

A tormentor who wears a smile inflicts a double agony. Mrs. Lauson wrung her hands, and broke out in a cry of rage and anguish : " O Lord, let it strike me ! O Lord, let it strike me ! "

Squire Lauson took a chair, crossed his thick, muscular legs, glanced at his wife, glanced at the levin-seamed sky, and remarked with a chuckle, " I 'm waiting to see this thing out."

" Father, I say it 's perfectly awful," remonstrated Miss Mercy Lauson. " Mother, ain 't you ashamed of yourself ? "

Miss Mercy was an old maid of the grave, sad, sickly New England type. She pronounced her reproof in a high, thin, passionless monotone, without a gesture or a flash of expression, without glancing at the persons whom she addressed, looking straight before her at the wall. She seemed to speak without emotion, and merely from a stony sense of duty. It was as if a message had been delivered by the mouth of an automaton.

Both the Squire and his wife made some response, but a prolonged crash of thunder drowned the feeble blasphemy of their voices, and the moving of their lips was like a mockery of life, as if the lips of corpses had been stirred by galvanism. Then, as if impatient of hearing both man and God, Mrs. Lauson clasped her hands over her ears, and fled away to some inner room of the shaking old house, seeking perhaps the little pity that there is for the wretched in solitude. The Squire remained seated, his gray and horny fingers drumming on the arms of the

chair, and his faded lips murmuring some inaudible conversation.

For the wretchedness of Mrs. Lauson there was partial cause in the disposition and ways of her husband. Very odd was the old Squire; violently combative could he be in case of provocation; and to those who resisted what he called his rightful authority he was a tyrant.

Having lost the wife whom he had ruled for so many years, and having enjoyed the serene but lonely empire of widowhood for eighteen months, he felt the need of some one for some purpose,—perhaps to govern. Once resolved on a fresh spouse, he set about searching for one in a clear-headed and business-like manner, as if it had been a question of getting a family horse.

The woman whom he finally received into his flinty bosom was a maiden of forty-five, who had known in her youth the uneasy joys of many flirtations, and who had marched through various successes (the triumphs of a small university town) to sit down at last in a life-long disappointment. Regretting her past, dissatisfied with every present, demanding improbabilities of the future, eager still to be flattered and worshipped and obeyed, she was woefully unfitted for marriage with an old man of plain habits and retired life, who was quite as egoistic as herself and far more combative and domineering. It was soon a horrible thing to remember the young lovers who had gone long ago, but who, it seemed to her, still adored her, and to compare them with this unsympathizing master, who gave her no courtship nor tender reverence, and who spoke but to demand submission.

“In a general way,” says a devout old lady of my

acquaintance, "Divine Providence blesses second marriages."

With no experience of my own in this line, and with not a large observation of the experience of others, I am nevertheless inclined to admit that my friend has the right of it. Conceding the fact that second marriages are usually happy, one naturally asks, Why is it? Is it because a man knows better how to select a second wife? or because he knows better how to treat her? Well disposed toward both these suppositions, I attach the most importance to the latter.

No doubt Benedict chooses more thoughtfully when he chooses a second time; no doubt he is governed more by judgment than in his first courtship, and less by blind impulse; no doubt he has learned some love-making wisdom from experience. A woman who will be patient with him, a woman who will care well for his household affairs and for his children, a woman who will run steadily rather than showily in the domestic harness,—that is what he usually wants when he goes sparkling at forty or fifty.

But this is not all and not even the half of the explanation. He has acquired a knowledge of what woman is, and a knowledge of what may fairly be required of her. He has learned to put himself in her place; to grant her the sympathy which her sensitive heart needs; to estimate the sufferings which arise from her variable health; in short, he has learned to be thoughtful and patient and merciful. Moreover, he is apt to select some one who, like himself, has learned command of temper and moderation of expectation from the lessons of life.

As he knows that a glorified wife is impossible here below, so she makes no strenuous demand for an angel husband.

But Squire Thomas Lauson had married an old maid who had not yet given up the struggle to be a girl, and who, in consequence of a long and silly bellehood, could not put up with any form of existence which was not a continual courtship. Furthermore, he himself was not a persimmon ; he had not gathered sweetness from the years which frosted his brow. An interestingly obdurate block of the Puritan granite of New England, he was almost as self-opinionated, domineering, pugnacious, and sarcastic as he had been at fifteen. He still had overmuch of the unripe spirit which plagues little boys, scoffs at girls, stones frogs, drowns kittens, and mutters domestic defiances. If Mrs. Lauson was skittish and fractious, he was her full match as a wife-breaker.

In short, the Squire had not chosen wisely ; he was not fitted to win a woman's heart by sympathy and justice ; and thus Providence had not blessed his second marriage.

We must return now to Miss Mercy Lauson and her niece Bessie. They are alone once more, for Squire Lauson has finished his sarcastic mutterings, and has stumped away to some other dungeon of the unhappy old house.

“ You *see*, Bessie ! ” said Miss Mercy, after a pinching of her thin lips which was like the biting of forceps, — “ you *see* how married people can live with each other. Bickerings an' strife ! bickerings an' strife ! But for all that you mean to marry Henry Foster.”

We must warn the reader not to expect vastness of thought or eloquence of speech from Miss Mercy. Her narrow-shouldered, hollow-chested soul could not grasp ideas of much moment, nor handle such as she was able to grasp with any vigor or grace.

"I should like to know," returned Bessie with spirit, "if I am not likely to have my share of bickerings and strife, if I stay here and don't get married."

"That depends upon how far you control your temper, Elizabeth."

"And so it does in marriage, I suppose."

Miss Mercy found herself involved in an argument, when she had simply intended to play the part of a preacher in his pulpit, warning and reproving without being answered. She accepted the challenge in a tone of iced pugnacity, which indicated in part a certain imperfect habit of self-control, and in part the unrestrainable peevishness of a chronic invalid.

"I don't say folks will necessarily be unhappy in merridge," she went on. "Merridge is a Divine ord'nance, an' I'm obligeed to respect it as such. I do, I suppose, respect it more 'n some who've entered into it. But merridge, to obtain the Divine blessing, must not be a yoking with unbelievers. There's the trouble with father's wife; she ain't a professor. There, too, 's the trouble with Henry Foster; he's not one of those who've chosen the better part. I want you to think it all over in soberness of sperrit, Elizabeth."

"It is the only thing you know against him," replied the girl, flushing with the anger of outraged affection.

"No, it ain't. He's brought home strange ways from

abroad. He smokes an' drinks beer an' plays cards ; an' his form seldom darkens the threshold of the sanctuary. Elizabeth, I must be plain with you on this vital subject. I 'm going to be as plain with you as your own conscience ought to be. I see it 's no use talking to you 'bout duty an' the life to come. I must — there 's no sort of doubt about it — I *must* bring the things of this world to bear on you. You know I 've made my will : I 've left every cent of my property to you, — twenty thousand dollars ! Well, if you enter into merridge with that young man, I shall alter it. I ain't going to have my money, — the money that my poor God-fearing aunt left me, — I ain't going to have it fooled away on card-players an' scorners. Now there it is, Elizabeth. There 's what my duty tells me to do, an' what I shall do. Ponder it well an' take your choice."

"I don't care," burst forth Bessie, springing to her feet. "I shall tell *him*, and if it makes no difference to *him*, it will make none to *me*."

Here a creak in the floor caught her ear, and turning quickly she discovered Henry Foster. Entering the house by a side door, and coming through a short lateral passage to the front hall, he had reached it in time to hear the close of the conversation and catch its entire drift. You could see in his face that he had heard thus much, for healthy, generous, kindly, and cheerful as the face usually was, it wore now a confused and pained expression.

"I beg pardon for disturbing you," he said. "I was pelted into the house to get out of the shower, and I took the shortest cut."

Bessie's Oriental visage flushed to a splendid crimson, and a whiter ashiness stole into the sallow cheek of Aunt Mercy. The girl, quick and adroit as most women are in leaping out of embarrassments, rushed into a strain of light conversation. How wet Professor Foster was, and would n't he go and dry himself? What a storm it had been, and what wonderful, dreadful thunder and lightning; and how glad she was that he had come, for it seemed as if he were some protection.

"There 's only One who can protect us," murmured Aunt Mercy, "either in such seasons or any others."

"His natural laws are our proper recourse," respectfully replied Foster, who was religious too, in his scientific fashion.

Bessie cringed with alarm; here was an insinuated attack on her aunt's favorite dogma of special providences; the subject must be pitched overboard at once.

"What is the news in Hampstead?" she asked. "Has the town gone to sleep, as Barham has? You ought to wake us up with something amusing."

"Jennie Brown is engaged," said Foster. "Is n't that satisfactory?"

"O dear! how many times does that make?" laughed Bessie. "Is it a student again?"

"Yes, it is a student."

"You ought to make it a college offence for students to engage themselves," continued Bessie. "You know that they can hardly ever marry, and generally break the girls' hearts."

"Have they broken Jennie Brown's? She does n't

believe it, nor her present young man either. I 've no doubt he thinks her as good as new."

"I dare say. But such things hurt girls in general, and you professors ought to see to it, and I want to know why you don't. But is that all the news? That 's such a small matter! such an old sort of thing! If I had come from Hampstead, I would have brought more than that."

So Bessie rattled on, partly because she loved to talk to this admirable Professor, but mainly to put off the crisis which she saw was coming.

But it was vain to hope for clemency, or even for much delay, from Aunt Mercy. Grim, unhappy, peevish as many invalids are, and impelled by a remorseless conscience, she was not to be diverted from finishing with Foster the horrid bone which she had commenced to pick with Bessie. You could see in her face what kind of thoughts and purposes were in her heart. She was used to quarrelling ; or, to speak more strictly, she was used to entertaining hard feelings towards others ; but she had never learned to express her bitter sentiments frankly. Unable to destroy them, she had felt herself bound in general not to utter them, and this non-utterance had grown to be one of her despotic and distressing "duties." Nothing could break through her shyness, her reserve, her habit of silence, but an emotion which amounted to passion ; and such an emotion she was not only unable to conceal, but she was also unable to exhibit it either nobly or gracefully : it shone all through her, and it made her seem spiteful.

As she was about to speak, however, a glance at Bes-

sie's anxious face checked her. After her painful, severe fashion, she really loved the girl, and she did not want to load her with any more sorrow than was strictly necessary. Moreover, the surely worthy thought occurred to her that Heaven might favor one last effort to convert this wrong-minded young man into one who could be safely intrusted with the welfare of her niece and the management of her money. Hailing the suggestion, in accordance with her usual exaltation of faith, as an indication from the sublimest of all authority, she entered upon her task with such power as nature had given her and such sweetness as a shattered nervous system had left her.

"Mr. Foster, there's one thing I greatly desire to see," she began in a hurried, tremulous tone. "I want you to come out from among the indifferent, an' join yourself to *us*. Why don't you do it? Why don't you become a professor?"

Foster was even more surprised and dismayed than most men are when thus addressed. Here was an appeal such as all of us must listen to with respect, not only because it represents the opinions of a vast and justly revered portion of civilized humanity, but because it concerns the highest mysteries and possibilities of which humanity is cognizant. As one who valued himself on being both a philosopher and a gentleman, he would have felt bound to treat any one courteously who thus approached him. But there was more; this appeal evidently alluded to his intentions of marriage; it was connected with the threat of disinheritance which he had overheard on entering the house. If he would promise

to "join the church," if he would even only appear to take the step into favorable consideration, he could remove the objections of this earnest woman to his betrothal, and secure her property to his future wife. But Foster could not do what policy demanded; he had his "honest doubts," and he could not remove them by an exercise of will; moreover, he was too self-respectful and honorable to be a hypocrite. After pondering Aunt Mercy's question for a moment, he answered with a dignity of soul which was not appreciated, —

"I should have no objection to what you propose, if it would not be misunderstood. If it would only mean that I believe in God, and that I worship his power and goodness, I would oblige you. But it would be received as meaning more, — as meaning that I accept doctrines which I am still examining, — as meaning that I take upon myself obligations which I do not yet hold binding."

"Don't you believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?" demanded Miss Mercy, striking home with telling directness.

"I believe in a Deity who views his whole universe with equal love. I believe in a Deity greater than I always hear preached."

Miss Mercy was puzzled; for while this confession of faith did not quite tally with what she was accustomed to receive from pulpits, there was about it a largeness of religious perception which slightly excited her awe. Nevertheless, it showed a dangerous vagueness, and she decided to demand something more explicit.

"What are your opinions on the inspiration of the Scriptures?" she asked.

He had been reading Colenso's work on Genesis ; and, so far as he could judge the Bishop's premises, he agreed with his conclusions. At the same time he was aware that such an exegesis would seem simple heresy to Miss Mercy, and that whoever held it would be condemned by her as a heathen and an infidel. After a moment of hesitation, he responded bravely and honestly, though with a placating smile.

"Miss Lauson, there are some subjects, indeed there are many subjects, on which I have no fixed opinions. I used to have opinions on almost everything ; but I found them very troublesome, I had to change them so often ! I have decided not to declare any more positive opinions, but only to entertain suppositions to the effect that this or that may be the case ; meantime holding myself ready to change my hypotheses on further evidence."

Although he seemed to her guilty of shuffling away from her question, yet she, in the main, comprehended his reply distinctly enough. He did not believe in plenary inspiration ; that was clear, and so also was her duty clear ; she must not let him have her niece nor her money.

Now there was a something in her face like the forming of columns for an assault, or rather like the irrational, ungovernable gathering of clouds for a storm. Her staid, melancholy soul — a soul which usually lay in chains and solitary — climbed writhing to her lips and eyes, and made angry gestures before it spoke. Bessie stared at her in alarm ; she tried, in a spirit of youthful energy, to look her down ; but the struggle of prevention was useless ; the hostile words came.

"Mr. Foster, I can't willingly give my niece to such an one as you," she said in a tremulous but desperate monotone. "I s'pose, though, it's no use forbidding you to go with her. I s'pose you would n't mind that. But I expect you *will* care for one thing,—for her good. My will is made now in her favor. But if she marries you I shall change it. I sha' n't leave her a cent."

Here her sickly strength broke down; such plain utterance of feeling and purpose was too much for her nerves; she burst into honest, bitter tears, and, rushing to her room, locked herself up; no doubt, too, she prayed there long, and read solemnly in the Scriptures.

What was the result of this conscientious but no doubt unwise remonstrance? After a shock of disagreeable surprise, the two lovers did what all true lovers would have done; they entered into a solemn engagement that no considerations of fortune should prevent their marriage. They shut their eyes on the future, braved all the adverse chances of life, and almost prayed for trials in order that each might show the other greater devotion. The feeling was natural and ungovernable, and I claim also that it was beautiful and noble.

"Do you know all?" asked Bessie. "Grandfather has never proposed to leave me anything, he hated my father so! It was always understood that Aunt Mercy was to take care of me."

"I want nothing with you," said Foster. "I will slave myself to death for you. I will rejoice to do it."

"O, I knew it would be so!" replied the girl, almost faint with joy and love. "I knew you would be true to me. I knew how grand you were."

When they looked out upon the earth, after this scene, during which they had been conscious of nothing but each other, the storm had fled beyond verdant hills, and a rainbow spanned all the visible landscape, seeming to them indeed a bow of promise.

"O, we can surely be happy in such a world as this!" said Bessie, her face colored and illuminated by youth, hope, and love.

"We will find a cloud castle somewhere," responded the young man, pointing to the western sky, piled with purple and crimson.

Bessie was about to accompany him to the gate on his departure, as was her simple and affectionate custom, when a voice called her up stairs.

"O dear!" she exclaimed, pettishly. "It seems as if I could n't have a moment's peace. Good by, my darling."

During the close of that day, at the hour which in Barham was known as "early candle-lighting," the Lauson tragedy began to take form. The mysterious shadow which vaguely announced its on-coming was the disappearance from the family ken of that lighthouse of regularity, that fast-rooted monument of strict habit, Aunt Mercy. The kerosene lamp which had so long beamed upon her darnings and mendings, or upon her more æsthetic labors in behalf of the Barham sewing society, or upon the open yellow pages of her Scott's Commentary and Baxter's Saints' Rest, now flared distractedly about the sitting-room, as if in amazement at her absence. Nowhere was seen her tall, thin, hard form, the truthful outward expression of her lean and sickly soul; nowhere

was heard the afflicted squeak of her broad calfskin shoes, symbolical of the worryings of her fretful conscience. The doors which she habitually shut to keep out the night-draughts remained free to swing, and, if they could find an aiding hand or breeze, to bang, in celebration of their independence. The dog might wag his tail in wonder through the parlor, and the cat might profane the sofa with his stretchings and slumbers.

At first the absence of Aunt Mercy merely excited such pleasant considerations as these. The fact was accepted as a relief from burdens; it tended towards liberty and jocoseness of spirit. The honest and well-meaning and devout woman had been the censor of the family, and, next after the iron-headed Squire, its dictator. Bessie might dance alone about the sober rooms, and play operatic airs and waltzes upon her much-neglected piano, without being called upon to assume sackcloth and ashes for her levity. The cheerful life which seemed to enter the house because Aunt Mercy had left it was a severe commentary on the sombre and unlovely character which her diseased sense of duty had driven her to give to her unquestionably sincere religious sentiment. It hinted that if she should be taken altogether away from the family, her loss would awaken little mourning, and would soon be forgotten.

Presently, however, this persistent absence of one whose very nature it was to be present excited surprise, and eventually a mysterious uneasiness. Search was made about the house; no one was discovered up stairs but Mrs. Lauson, brooding alone; then a neighbor or two was visited by Bessie; still no Aunt Mercy. The

solemn truth was, although no sanguinary sign as yet revealed it, that the Lauson tragedy had an hour since been consummated.

The search for the missing Aunt Mercy continued until it aroused the interest and temper of Squire Lauson. Determined to find his daughter once that he had set about it, and petulant at the failure of one line of investigation after another, the hard old gentleman stumped noisily about the house, his thick shoes squeaking down the passages like two bands of music, and his peeled hickory cane punching open doors and upsetting furniture. When he returned to the sitting-room from one of these boisterous expeditions, he found his wife sitting in the light of the kerosene lamp, and sewing with an impatient, an almost spiteful rapidity, as was her custom when her nerves were unbearably irritated.

"Where's Mercy?" he trumpeted. "Where *is* the old gal? Has anybody eloped with her? I saw Deacon Jones about this afternoon."

This jest was meant to amuse and perhaps to conciliate Mrs. Lauson, for whom he sometimes seemed to have a rough pity, as hard to bear as downright hostility. He had now and then a way of joking with her and forcing her to smile by looking her steadily in the eye. But this time his moral despotism failed; she answered his gaze with a defiant glare, and remained sullen; after another moment she rushed out of the room, as if craving relief from his domineering presence.

Apparently the Squire would have called her back, had not his attention been diverted by the entry of his granddaughter.

"I say, Bessie, have you looked in the garden?" he demanded. "Why the Devil have n't you? Don't you know Mercy's hole where she meditates? Go there and hunt for her."

As the girl disappeared he turned to the door through which his wife had fled, as if he still had a savage mind to roar for her reappearance. But after pondering a moment, and deciding that he was more comfortable in solitude, he sat slowly down in his usual elbow-chair, and broke out in a growling soliloquy:—

"There's no comfort like making one's self miserable. It's a — sight better than making the best of it. We're all having a devilish fine time. We're as happy as bugs in a rug. Hey diddle diddle, the cat's in the fiddle—"

The continuity of his rough-laid stone-wall sarcasm was interrupted by Bessie, who rushed into the sitting-room with a low shriek and a pallid face.

"What's the matter now?" he demanded. "Has the cow jumped over the moon?"

"O grandfather!" she gasped, "I've found Aunt Mercy. I'm afraid she's dead."

"Hey!" exclaimed the Squire, starting up eagerly as he remembered that Aunt Mercy was his own child. "You don't say so! Where is she?"

Bessie turned and reeled out of the house; the old man thumped after her on his cane. At the bottom of the garden was a small, neglected arbor, thickly overgrown with grape-vines in unpruned leaf, whither Aunt Mercy was accustomed to repair in her seasons of unusual perplexity or gloom, there to seek guidance or relief

in meditation and prayer. In this arbor they found her, seated crouchingly on a bench near the doorway, her arms stretched over a little table in front of her, and her head lying between them with the face turned from the gazers. The moon glared in a ghastly way upon her ominously white hands, and disclosed a dark yet gleaming stain, seemingly a drying pool, which spread out from beneath her forehead.

"Good Lord!" groaned Squire Lauson. "Mercy! I say, Mercy!"

He seized her hand, but he had scarcely touched it ere he dropped it, for it was the icy, repulsive, alarming hand of a corpse. We must compress our description of this scene of horrible discovery. Miss Mercy Lauson was dead, the victim of a brutal assassination, her right temple opened by a gash two inches deep, her blood already clotted in pools or dried upon her face and fingers. It must have been an hour, or perhaps two hours, since the blow had been dealt. At her feet was the fatal weapon, — an old hatchet which had long lain about the garden, and which offered no suggestion as to who was the murderer.

When it first became clear to Squire Lauson that his daughter was dead, and had been murdered, he uttered a sound between a gasp and a sob; but almost immediately afterward he spoke in his habitually vigorous and rasping voice, and his words showed that he had not lost his iron self-possession.

"Bessie, run into the house," he said. "Call the hired men, and bring a lantern with you."

When she returned he took the lantern, threw the

gleam of it over his dead daughter's face, groaned, shook his head, and then, leaning on his cane, commenced examining the earth, evidently in search of footmarks.

"There's your print, Bessie," he mumbled. "And there's my print. But whose print's that? That's the man. That's a long slim foot, with nails across the ball. That's the man. Don't disturb those tracks. I'll set the lantern down there. Don't you disturb 'em."

There were several of these strange tracks; the clayey soil of the walk, slightly tempered with sand, had preserved them with fatal distinctness; it showed them advancing to the arbor and halting close by the murdered woman. As Bessie stared at them, it seemed to her that they were fearfully familiar, though where she had seen them before she could not say.

"Keep away from those tracks," repeated Squire Lauson as the two laborers who lived with him came down the garden. "Now, then, what are you staring at? She's dead. Take her up—O, for God's sake, be gentle about it!—take her up, I tell you. There! Now, carry her along."

As the men moved on with the body he turned to Bessie and said: "Leave the lantern just there. And don't you touch those tracks. Go on into the house."

With his own hands he aided to lay out his daughter on a table, and drew her cap from her temples so as to expose the bloody gash to view. There was a little natural agony in the tremulousness of his stubby and grizzly chin; but in the glitter of his gray eyes there was an expression which was not so much sorrow as revenge.

"That's a pretty job," he said at last, glaring at the

mangled gray head. "I should like to l'arn who did it."

It was not known till the day following how he passed the next half-hour. It seems that, some little time previous, this man of over ninety years had conceived the idea of repairing with his own hands the cracked wall of his parlor, and had for that purpose bought a quantity of plaster of Paris and commenced a series of patient experiments in mixing and applying it. Furnished with a basin of his prepared material, he stalked out to the arbor and busied himself with taking a mould of the strange footstep to which he had called Bessie's attention, succeeding in his labor so well as to be able to show next day an exact counterpart of the sole which had made the track.

Shortly after he had left the house, and glancing cautiously about as if to make sure that he had indeed left it, his wife entered the room where lay the dead body. She came slowly up to the table, and looked at the ghastly face for some moments in silence, with precisely that staid, slightly shuddering air which one often sees at funerals, and without any sign of the excitement which one naturally expects in the witnesses of a mortal tragedy. In any ordinary person, in any one who was not, like her, denaturalized by the egotism of shattered nerves, such mere wonder and repugnance would have appeared incomprehensively brutal. But Mrs. Lauson had a character of her own; she could be different from others without exciting prolonged or specially severe comment; people said to themselves, "Just like her," and made no further criticism, and almost certainly no remonstrance. Bessie herself, the moment she had exclaimed, "O grand-

mother! what shall we do?" felt how absurd it was to address such an appeal to such a person.

Mrs. Lauson replied by a glance which expressed weakness, alarm, and aversion, and which demanded, as plainly as words could say it, "How can you ask *me*?" Then without uttering a syllable, without attempting to render any service or funereal courtesy, bearing herself like one who had been mysteriously absolved from the duties of sympathy and decorum, she turned her back on the body of her step-daughter with a start of disgust, and walked hastily from the room.

Of course there was a gathering of the neighbors, a hasty and useless search after the murderer, a medical examination of the victim, and a legal inquest at the earliest practicable moment, the verdict being "death by the hand of some person unknown." Even the funeral passed, with its mighty crowd and its solemn excitement; and still public suspicion had not dared to single out any one as the criminal. It seemed for a day or two as if the family life might shortly settle into its old tenor, the same narrow routine of quiet discontent or irrational bickerings, with no change but the loss of such inflammation as formerly arose from Aunt Mercy's well-meant, but irritating sense of duty. The Squire, however, was permanently and greatly changed: not that he had lost the spirit of petty dictation which led him to interfere in every household act, even to the boiling of the pot, but he had acquired a new object in life, and one which seemed to restore all his youthful energy; he was more restlessly and distressingly vital than he had been for years. No Indian was ever more intent on avenging a

debt of blood than was he on hunting down the murderer of his daughter. This terrible old man has a strong attraction for us: we feel that we have not thus far done him justice: he imperiously demands further description.

Squire Lauson was at this time ninety-three years of age. The fact appeared incredible, because he had preserved, almost unimpaired, not only his moral energy and intellectual faculties, but also his physical senses, and even to an extraordinary degree his muscular strength. His long and carelessly worn hair was not white, but merely gray; and his only baldness was a shining hand's-breadth, prolonging the height of his forehead. His face was deeply wrinkled, but more apparently with thought and passion than from decay, for the flesh was still well under control of the muscles, and the expression was so vigorous that one was tempted to call it robust. There was nothing of that insipid and almost babyish tranquillity which is commonly observable in the countenances of the extremely aged. The cheekbones were heavy, though the healthy fulness of the cheeks prevented them from being pointed; the jaws, not yet attenuated by the loss of many teeth, were unusually prominent and muscular; the heavy Roman nose still stood high above the projecting chin. In general, it was a long, large face, grimly and ruggedly massive, of a uniform grayish color, and reminding you of a visage carved in granite.

In figure the Squire was of medium height, with a deep chest and heavy limbs. He did not stand quite upright, but the stoop was in his shoulders and not in his loins, and arose from a slouching habit of carrying him-

self much more than from weakness. He walked with a cane, but his step, though rather short, was strong and rapid, and he could get over the ground at the rate of three miles an hour. At times he seemed a little deaf, but it was mainly from absorption of mind and inattention, and he could hear perfectly when he was interested. The great gray eyes under his bushy, pepper-and-salt eyebrows were still so sound that he only used spectacles in reading. As for voice, there was hardly such another in the neighborhood ; it was a strong, rasping, dictatorial *caw*, like the utterance of a gigantic crow ; it might have served the needs of a sea-captain in a tempest. A jocose neighbor related that he had in a dream descended into hell, and that in trying to find his way out he had lost his reckoning, until, hearing a tremendous volley of oaths on the surface of the earth over his head, he knew that he was under the hills of Barham, and that Squire Lauson was swearing at his oxen.

Squire Lauson was immense ; you might travel over him for a week without discovering half his wonders ; he was a continent, and he must remain for the most part an unknown continent. Bringing to a close our explorations into his character and past life, we will follow him up simply as one of the personages of this tragedy. He was at the present time very active, but also to a certain extent inexplicable. It was known that he had interviews with various officials of justice, that he furnished them with his plaster cast of the strange footprint which had been found in the garden, and that he earnestly impressed upon them the value of this object for the purpose of tracking out the murderer. But he had other

lines of investigation in his steady old hands, as was discoverable later.

His manner towards his granddaughter and his wife changed noticeably. Instead of treating the first with neglect, and the second with persistent hostility or derision, he became assiduously attentive to them, addressed them frequently in conversation, and sought to win their confidence. With Bessie this task was easy, for she was one of those natural, unspoiled women, who long for sympathy, and she inclined toward her grandfather the moment she saw any kindness in his eyes. They had long talks about the murdered relative, about every event or suspicion which seemed to relate to her death, about the property which she had left to Bessie, and about the girl's prospects in life.

Not so with Mrs. Lauson. Even the horror which had entered the family life could not open the hard crust which disease and disappointment had formed over her nature, and she met the old man's attempts to make her communicative with her usual sulky or pettish reticence. There never was such an unreasonable creature as this wretched wife, who, while she remained unmarried, had striven so hard to be agreeable to the other sex. It was not with her husband alone that she fought, but with every one, whether man or woman, who came near her. Whoever entered the house, whether it were some gossiping neighbor or the clergyman or the doctor, she flew out of it on discovering their approach, and wandered alone about the fields until they departed. This absence she would perhaps employ in eating green fruit, hoping, as she said, to make herself sick and die, or, at least, to

make herself sick enough to plague her husband. At meals she generally sat in glum silence, although once or twice she burst out in violent tirades, scoffing at the Squire's management of the place, defying him to strike her, etc.

Her appearance at this time was miserable and little less than disgusting. Her skin was thick and yellow; her eyes were bloodshot and watery; her nose was reddened with frequent crying; her form was of an almost skeleton thinness; her manner was full of strange starts and gaspings. It was curious to note the contrast between her perfect wretchedness of aspect and the unfeeling coolness with which the Squire watched and studied her.

In this woful way was the Lauson family getting on when the country around was electrified by an event which almost threw the murder itself into the shade. Henry Foster, the accepted lover of Bessie Barron, a professor in the Scientific College of Hampstead, was suddenly arrested as the assassin of Miss Mercy Lauson.

“What does this mean!” was his perfectly natural exclamation, when seized by the officers of justice; but it was uttered with a sudden pallor which awakened in the bystanders a strong suspicion of his guilt. No definite answer was made to his question until he was closeted with the lawyer whom he immediately retained in his defence.

“I should like to get at the whole of your case, Mr. Foster,” said the legal gentleman. “I must beg you, for your own sake, to be entirely frank with me.”

“I assure you that I know nothing about the murder,”

was the firm reply. "I don't so much as understand why I should be suspected of the horrible business."

The lawyer, Mr. Adams Patterson, after studying Foster in a furtive way, as if doubtful whether there had been perfect honesty in his assertion of innocence, went on to state what he supposed would be the case of the prosecution.

"The evidence against you," he said, "so far at least as I can now discover, will all be circumstantial. They will endeavor to prove your presence at the scene of the tragedy by your tracks. Footmarks, said to correspond to yours, were found passing the door of the arbor, returning to it and going away from it."

"Ah!" exclaimed Foster. "I remember,— I did pass there. I will tell you how. It was in the afternoon. I was in the house during a thunder-storm which happened that day, and left it shortly after the shower ended. I went out through the garden because that was the nearest way to the rivulet at the bottom of the hill, and I wished to make some examinations into the structure of the water-bed. A part of the garden walk is gravelled, and on that I suppose my tracks did not show. But near the arbor the gravel ceases, and there I remember stepping into the damp mould. I did pass the arbor, and I did return to it. I returned to it because it had been a heavenly place to me. It was there that I proposed to Miss Barron, and that she accepted me. The moment that I had passed it I reproached myself for doing so. I went back, looked at the little spot for a moment, and left a kiss on the table. It was on that table that her hand had rested when I first dared to take it in mine."

His voice broke for an instant with an emotion which every one who has ever loved can at least partially understand.

"Good Heavens ! to think that such an impulse should entangle me in such a charge !" he added, when he could speak again.

"Well," he resumed, after a long sigh, "I left the arbor, — my heart as innocent and happy as any heart in the world, — I climbed over the fence and went down the hill. That is the last time that I was in those grounds that day. That is the whole truth, so help me God ! "

The lawyer seemed touched. Even then, however, he was saying to himself, "They always keep back something, if not everything." After meditating for a few seconds, he resumed his interrogatory.

"Did any one see you ? did Miss Barron see you, as you passed through the garden ? "

"I think not. Some one called her just as I left her, and she went, I believe, up stairs."

"Did you see the person who called ? Did you see any one ? "

"No one. But the voice was a woman's voice. I took it to be that of a servant."

Mr. Patterson fell into a thoughtful silence, his arms resting on the elbows of his chair, and his anxious eyes wandering over the floor.

"But what motive ? " broke out Foster, addressing the lawyer as if he were an accuser and an enemy, — "what sufficient motive had I for such a hideous crime ? "

"Ah ! that is just it. The motive ! They will make a great deal of that. Why, you must be able to guess

what is alleged. Miss Lauson had made a will in her niece's favor, but had threatened to disinherit her if she married you. This fact,—as has been made known by an incautious admission of Miss Bessie Barron,—this fact you were aware of. The death came just in time to prevent a change in the will. Don't you see the obvious inference of the prosecution?"

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Foster, springing up and pacing his cell. "I murder a woman,—murder my wife's aunt,—for money,—for twenty thousand dollars! Am I held so low as that? Why, it is a sum that any clever man can earn in this country in a few years. We could have done without it. I would not have asked for it, much less murdered for it. Tell me, Mr. Patterson, do you suppose me capable of such degrading as well as such horrible guilt?"

"Mr. Foster," replied the lawyer, with impressive deliberation, "I shall go into this case with a confidence that you are absolutely innocent."

"Thank you," murmured the young man, grasping Patterson's hand violently, and then turning away to wipe a tear, which had been too quick for him.

"Excuse my weakness," he said, presently. "But I don't believe any worthy man is strong enough to bear the insult that the world has put upon me, without showing his suffering."

Certainly, Foster's bearing and the sentiments which he expressed had the nobility and pathos of injured innocence. Were it not that innocence *can be* counterfeited, as also that a fine demeanor and touching utterance are not points in law, no alarming doubt would seem to

overshadow the result of the trial. And yet, strange as it must seem to those whom my narrative may have impressed in favor of Foster, the sedate, Puritanic population of Barham and its vicinity inclined more and more toward the presumption of his guilt.

For this there were two reasons. In the first place, who but he had any cause of spite against Mercy Lauson, or could hope to draw any profit from her death? There had been no robbery; there was not a sign that the victim's clothing had been searched; the murder had clearly not been the work of a burglar or a thief. But Foster, if he indeed assassinated this woman, had thereby removed an obstacle to his marriage, and had secured to his future wife a considerable fortune.

In the second place, Foster was such a man as the narrowly scrupulous and orthodox world of Barham would naturally regard with suspicion. Graduate of a German university, he had brought back to America, not only a superb scientific education, but also what passed, in the region where he had settled, for a laxity of morals. Professor as he was in the austere college of Hampstead, and expected, therefore, to set a luminously correct example in both theoretical and practical ethics, he held theological opinions which were too modern to be considered sound, and he even neglected church to an extent which his position rendered scandalous. In spite of the strict prohibitory law of Massachusetts, he made use of lager-beer and other still stronger fluids; and, although he was never known to drink to excess, the mere fact of breaking the statute was a sufficient offence to rouse prejudice. It was also reported of him, to the honest horror of many serious

minds, that he had been detected in geologizing on Sunday, and that he was fond of whist.

How apt we are to infer that a man who violates *our* code of morals will also violate his own code ! Of course this Germanized American could not believe that murder was right ; but then he played cards and drank beer, which we of Barham knew to be wrong ; and if he would do one wrong thing, why not another ?

Meantime how was it with Bessie ? How is it always with women when those whom they love are charged with unworthiness ? Do they exhibit the "judicial mind" ? Do they cautiously weigh the evidence and decide according to it ? The girl did not entertain the faintest supposition that her lover could be guilty ; she was no more capable of blackening his character than she was capable of taking his life. She would not speak to people who showed by word or look that they doubted his innocence. She raged at a world which could be so stupid, so unjust, and so wicked as to slander the good fame and threaten the life of one whom her heart had crowned with more than human perfections.

But what availed all her confidence in his purity ? There was the finger of public suspicion pointed at him, and there was the hangman lying in wait for his precious life. She was almost mad with shame, indignation, grief, and terror. She rose as pale as a ghost from sleepless nights, during which she had striven in vain to unravel this terrible mystery, and prayed in vain that Heaven would revoke this unbearable calamity. Day by day she visited her betrothed in his cell, and cheered him with the sympathy of her trusting and loving soul.

The conversations which took place on these occasions were so naïve and childlike in their honest utterance of emotion that I almost dread to record them, lest the deliberate, unpalpitating sense of criticism should pronounce them sickening, and mark them for ridicule.

"Darling," she once said to him, "we must be married. Whether you are to live or to die, I must be your wife."

He knelt down and kissed the hem of her dress in adoration of such self-sacrifice.

"Ah, my love, I never before knew what you were," he whispered, as she leaned forward, caught his head in her hands, dragged it into her lap, and covered it with kisses and tears. "Ah, my love, you are too good. I cannot accept such a sacrifice. When I am cleared publicly of this horrible charge, then I will ask you once more if you dare be my wife."

"Dare! O, how can you say such things!" she sobbed. "Don't you know that you are more to me than the whole universe? Don't you know that I would marry you, even if I knew you were guilty?"

There is no reasoning with this sublime passion of love, when it is truly itself. There is no reasoning with it; and Heaven be thanked that it is so! It is well to have one impulse in the world which has no egoism, which rejoices in self-immolation for the sake of its object, which is among emotions what a martyr is among men.

Foster's response was worthy of the girl's declaration. "My love," he whispered, "I have been bemoaning my ruined life, but I must bemoan it no more. It is success enough for any man to be loved by you, and as you love me."

"No, no!" protested Bessie. "It is not success enough for you. No success is enough for you. You deserve everything that ever man did deserve. And here you are insulted, trampled upon, and threatened. O, it is shameful and horrible!"

"My child, you must not help to break me down," implored Foster, feeling that he was turning weak under the thought of his calamity.

She started towards him in a spasm of remorse; it was as if she had suddenly become aware that she had stabbed him; her face and her attitude were full of self-reproach.

"O my darling, do I make you more wretched?" she asked, "when I would die for you! when you are my all! O, there is not a minute when I am worthy of you!"

These interviews left Foster possessed of a few minutes of consolation and peace, which would soon change into an increased poverty of despair and rage. For the first few days of his imprisonment his prevalent feeling was anger. He could not in the least accept his position; he would not look upon himself as one who was suspected with justice, or even with the slightest show of probability; he would not admit that society was pardonable for its doubts of him. He was not satisfied with mere hope of escape; on the contrary, he considered his accusers shamefully and wickedly blameworthy; he was angry at them, and wanted to wreak upon them a stern vengeance.

As the imprisonment dragged on, however, and his mind lost its tension under the pressure of trouble, there came moments when he did not quite know him-

self. It seemed to him that this man, who was charged with murder, was some one else, for whose character he could not stand security, and who might be guilty. He almost looked upon him with suspicion; he half joined the public in condemning him unheard. Perhaps this mental confusion was the foreshadowing of that insane state of mind in which prisoners have confessed themselves guilty of murders which they had not committed, and which have been eventually brought home to others. There are twilights between reason and unreason. The descent from the one condition to the other is oftener a slope than a precipice.

Meanwhile Bessie had, as a matter of course, plans for saving her lover; and these plans, almost as a matter of course too, were mainly impracticable. As with all young people and almost all women, she rebelled against the fixed procedures of society when they seemed likely to trample on the dictates of her affections. Now that it was her lover who was under suspicion of murder, it did not seem a necessity to her that the law should take its course, and, on the contrary, it seemed to her an atrocity. She knew that he was guiltless; she knew that he was suffering; why should he be tried? When told that he must have every legal advantage, she assented to it eagerly, and drove at once to see Mr. Patterson, and overwhelmed him with tearful implorations "to do everything,—to do everything that could be done,—yes, in short, to do everything." But still she could not feel that anything ought to be done, except to release at once this beautiful and blameless victim, and to make him every conceivable apology. As for bringing

him before a court, to answer with his life whether he were innocent or guilty, it was an injustice and an outrage which she rebelled against with all the energy of her ardent nature.

Who could prevent this infamy? In her ignorance of the machinery of justice, it seemed to her that her grandfather might. Notwithstanding the little sympathy that there had been between them, she went to the grim old man with her sorrows and her plans, proposing to him to arrest the trial. In her love and her simplicity she would have appealed to a mountain or to a tiger.

"What!" roared the Squire. "Stop the trial? Can't do it. I'm not the prosecutor. The State's attorney is the prosecutor."

"But can't you say that you think the proof against him is insufficient?" urged Bessie. "Can't you go to them and say that? Won't that do it?"

"Lord bless you!" replied Squire Lauson, staring in wonder at such ignorance, and dimly conscious of the love and sorrow which made it utter its simplicities.

"O grandfather! do have pity on him and on me!" pleaded Bessie.

He gave her a kinder glance than she had ever received from him before in her life. It occurred to him, as if it were for the first time, that she was very sweet and helpless, and that she was his own grandchild. He had hated her father. O, how he had hated the conceited city upstart, with his pert, positive ways! how he had rejoiced over his bankruptcy, if not over his death! The girl he had taken to his home, because, after all, she was a Lauson by blood, and it would be a family shame

to let her go begging her bread of strangers. But she had not won upon him ; she looked too much like that "damn jackanapes," her father ; moreover, she had contemptible city accomplishments, and she moped in the seclusion of Barham. He had been glad when she became engaged to that other "damn jackanapes," Foster ; and it had been agreeable to think that her marriage would take her out of his sight. Mercy had made a will in her favor ; he had sniffed and hooted at Mercy for her folly ; but, after all, he had in his heart consented to the will ; it saved him from leaving any of his money to a Barron.

Of late, however, there had been a softening in the Squire ; he could himself hardly believe that it was in his heart ; he half suspected at times that it was in his brain. A man who lives to ninety-three is exposed to this danger, that he may survive all his children. The Squire had walked to one grave after another, until he had buried his last son and his last daughter. After Mercy Lauson, there were no more children for him to see under ground ; and that fact, coupled with the shocking nature of her death, had strangely shaken him ; it had produced that singular softening which we have mentioned, and which seemed to him like a malady. Now, a little shattered, no longer the man that he so long had been, he was face to face with his only living descendant.

He reached out his gray, hard hand, and laid it on her glossy, curly hair. She started with surprise at the unaccustomed touch, and looked up in his face with a tearful sparkle of hope.

"Be quiet, Bessie," he said, in a voice which was less like a *caw* than usual.

"O grandfather! what do you mean?" she sobbed, guessing that deliverance might be nigh, and yet fearing to fall back into despair.

"Don't cry," was the only response of this close-mouthed, imperturbable old man.

"O, was it any one else?" she demanded. "Who do you think did it?"

"I have an idea," he admitted, after staring at her steadily, as if to impress caution. "But keep quiet. We'll see."

"You know it could n't be he that did it," urged Bessie. "Don't you know it could n't? He's too good."

The Squire laughed. "Why, some folks laid it to you," he said. "If he should be cleared, they might lay it to you again. There's no telling who 'll do such things, and there's no telling who 'll be suspected."

"And you *will* do something?" she resumed. "You *will* follow it up? You *will* save him?"

"Keep quiet," grimly answered the Squire. "I'm watching. But keep quiet. Not a word to a living soul."

Close on this scene came another, which proved to be the unravelling of the drama. That evening Bessie went early, as usual, to her solitary room, and prepared for one of those nights which are not a rest to the weary. She had become very religious since her trouble had come upon her; she read several chapters in the Bible, and then she prayed long and fervently; and, after a sob or two over her own shortcomings, the prayer was all for

Foster. Such is human devotion : the voice of distress is far more fervent than the voice of worship ; the weak and sorrowful are the true suppliants.

Her prayer ended, if ever it could be said to end while she waked, she strove anew to disentangle the mystery which threatened her lover, meanwhile hearing, half unawares, the noises of the night. Darkness has its speech, its still small whisperings and mutterings, a language which cannot be heard during the clamor of day, but which to those who must listen to it is painfully audible, and which rarely has pleasant things to say, but threatens rather, or warns. For a long time, disturbed by fingers that tapped at her window, by hands that stole along her wall, by feet that glided through the dark halls, Bessie could not sleep. She lost herself; then she came back to consciousness with the start of a swimmer struggling toward the surface; then she recommenced praying for Foster, and once more lost herself.

At last, half dozing, and yet half aware that she was weeping, she was suddenly and sharply roused by a distinct creak in the floor of her room. Bessie had in one respect inherited somewhat of her grandfather's iron nature, being so far from habitually timorous that she was noted among her girlish acquaintance for courage. But her nerves had been seriously shaken by the late tragedy, by anxiety, and by sleeplessness; it seemed to her that there was in the air a warning of great danger; she was half paralyzed by fright.

Struggling against her terror, she sprang out of bed and made a rush toward her door, meaning to close and lock it. Instantly there was a collision; she had thrown

herself against some advancing form ; in the next breath she was engaged in a struggle. Half out of her senses, she did not scream, did not query whether her assailant were man or woman, did not indeed use her intelligence in any distinct fashion, but only pushed and pulled in blind instinct of escape.

Once she had a sensation of being cut with some sharp instrument. Then she struck ; the blow told, and her antagonist fell heavily ; the fall was succeeded by a short shriek in a woman's voice. Bessie did not stop to wonder that any one engaged in an attempt at assassination should utter an outcry which would almost necessarily insure discovery and seizure. The shock of the sound seemed to restore her own powers of speech, and she burst into a succession of loud screams, calling on her grandfather for help.

In the same moment the hope which abides in light fell under her hand. Reeling against her dressing-table, her fingers touched a box of waxen matches, and she quickly drew one of them against the wood, sending a faint glimmer through the chamber. She was not horror-stricken, she did not grasp a comprehension of the true nature of the scene ; she simply stared in trembling wonder when she recognized Mrs. Lauson.

" You there, grandmother ! " gasped Bessie. " What has happened ? "

Mrs. Lauson, attired in an old morning-gown, was sitting on the floor, partially supported by one hand, while the other was moving about as if in search of some object. The object was a carving-knife ; she saw it, clutched it, and rose to her feet ; then for the first time

she looked at Bessie. "What do you lie awake and pray for?" she demanded, in a furious mutter. "You lie awake and pray every night. I've listened in the hall time and again, and heard you. I won't have it. I'll give you just three minutes to get to sleep."

Bessie did not think; it did not occur to her, at least not in any clear manner, that this was lunacy; she instinctively sprang behind a large chair and uttered another scream.

"I say, will you go to sleep?" insisted Mrs. Lauson, advancing and raising her knife.

Just in the moment of need there were steps in the hall; the still vigorous and courageous old Squire appeared upon the scene; after a violent struggle the maniac was disarmed and bound. She lay upon Bessie's bed, staring at her husband with bloodshot, watery eyes, and seemingly unconscious of anything but a sense of ill-treatment. The girl, meanwhile, had discovered a slight gash on her left arm, and had shown it to the Squire.

"Sallie," demanded the cold-blooded old man, "what have you been trying to knife Bessie for?"

"Because she lay awake and prayed," was the ready and firm response of downright mania.

"Look here, Sallie, what did you kill Mercy for?" continued the Squire, without changing a muscle of his countenance.

"Because she sat up and prayed," responded Mrs. Lauson. "She sat up in the garden and prayed against me. Ever so many people sit up and lie awake to pray against me. I won't have it."

"Ah!" said the old man. "Do you hear that, Bessie? Remember it, so as to say it upon your oath."

After a second or two he added, with something like a twinkle of his characteristic humor in his hard gray eyes, "So I saved my life by not praying!"

Thus ended the extraordinary scene which brought to light the murderer of Miss Mercy Lauson. It is almost needless to add that on the day following the maniac was conveyed to the State Lunatic Asylum, and that shortly afterward Bessie opened the prison gates of Henry Foster, and told him of his absolution from charge of crime.

"And now I want the whole world to get on its knees and ask your pardon," she said, after a long scene of tenderer words than must be reported.

"If the world should ask pardon for all its blunders," he said, with a smile, "it would pass its whole time in penance, and would n't make its living. Human life is like science, a sequence of mistakes, with generally a true direction."

One must stick to one's character. A philosopher is nothing if not philosophical.





THE IRON SHROUD.

BY WILLIAM MUDFORD.

THE castle of the Prince of Tolfi was built on the summit of the towering and precipitous rock of Scylla, and commanded a magnificent view of Sicily in all its grandeur. Here, during the wars of the Middle Ages, when the fertile plains of Italy were devastated by hostile factions, those prisoners were confined, for whose ransom a costly price was demanded. Here, too, in a dungeon excavated deep in the solid rock, the miserable victim was immured, whom revenge pursued, — the dark, fierce, and unpitying revenge of an Italian heart.

VIVENZIO, — the noble and the generous, the fearless in battle, and the pride of Naples in her sunny hours of peace, — the young, the brave, the proud Vivenzio, — fell beneath this subtle and remorseless spirit. He was the prisoner of Tolfi; and he languished in that rock-encircled dungeon, which stood alone, and whose portals never opened twice upon a living captive.

It had the semblance of a vast cage; for the roof and floor and sides were of iron, solidly wrought and spa-

ciously constructed. High above ran a range of seven grated windows, guarded with massy bars of the same metal, which admitted light and air. Save these, and the tall folding-doors beneath them, which occupied the centre, no chink or chasm or projection broke the smooth, black surface of the walls. An iron bedstead, littered with straw, stood in one corner, and, beside it, a vessel of water, and a coarse dish filled with coarser food.

Even the intrepid soul of Vivenzio shrunk with dismay as he entered this abode, and heard the ponderous doors triple-locked by the silent ruffians who conducted him to it. Their silence seemed prophetic of his fate, of the living grave that had been prepared for him. His menaces and his entreaties, his indignant appeals for justice, and his impatient questioning of their intentions, were alike vain. They listened but spoke not. Fit ministers of a crime that should have no tongue !

How dismal was the sound of their retiring steps ! And, as their faint echoes died along the winding passages, a fearful presage grew within him, that nevermore the face or voice or tread of man would greet his senses. He had seen human beings for the last time ! And he had looked his last upon the bright sky and upon the smiling earth and upon a beautiful world he loved, and whose minion he had been ! Here he was to end his life,—a life he had just begun to revel in ! And by what means ? By secret poison ? or by murderous assault ? No ; for then it had been needless to bring him thither. Famine, perhaps,—a thousand deaths in one ! It was terrible to think of it ; but it was yet more terri-

ble to picture long, long years of captivity in a solitude so appalling, a loneliness so dreary, that thought, for want of fellowship, would lose itself in madness, or stagnate into idiocy.

He could not hope to escape, unless he had the power, with his bare hands, of rending asunder the solid iron walls of his prison. He could not hope for liberty from the relenting mercies of his enemy. His instant death, under any form of refined cruelty, was not the object of Tolfi; for he might have inflicted it, and he had not. It was too evident, therefore, he was reserved for some premeditated scheme of subtle vengeance; and what vengeance could transcend in fiendish malice, either the slow death of famine, or the still slower one of solitary incarceration till the last lingering spark of life expired, or till reason fled, and nothing should remain to perish but the brute functions of the body?

It was evening when Vivenzio entered his dungeon; and the approaching shades of night wrapped it in total darkness, as he paced up and down, revolving in his mind these horrible forebodings. No tolling bell from the castle, or from any neighboring church or convent, struck upon his ears to tell how the hours passed. Frequently he would stop and listen for some sound that might betoken the vicinity of man; but the solitude of the desert, the silence of the tomb, are not so still and deep as the oppressive desolation by which he was encompassed. His heart sunk within him, and he threw himself dejectedly upon his couch of straw. Here sleep gradually obliterated the consciousness of misery; and bland dreams wafted his delighted spirit to scenes which were

once glowing realities for him, in whose ravishing illusions he soon lost the remembrance that he was Tolfi's prisoner.

When he awoke, it was daylight; but how long he had slept he knew not. It might be early morning, or it might be sultry noon; for he could measure time by no other note of its progress than light and darkness. He had been so happy in his sleep, amid friends who loved him, and the sweeter endearments of those who loved him as friends could not, that, in the first moments of waking, his startled mind seemed to admit the knowledge of his situation, as if it had burst upon it for the first time, fresh in all its appalling horrors. He gazed round with an air of doubt and amazement, and took up a handful of the straw upon which he lay, as though he would ask himself what it meant. But memory, too faithful to her office, soon unveiled the melancholy past, while reason, shuddering at the task, flashed before his eyes the tremendous future. The contrast overpowered him. He remained for some time lamenting, like a truth, the bright visions that had vanished, and recoiling from the present, which clung to him as a poisoned garment.

When he grew more calm, he surveyed his gloomy dungeon. Alas! the stronger light of day only served to confirm what the gloomy indistinctness of the preceding evening had partially disclosed,—the utter impossibility of escape. As, however, his eyes wandered round and round, and from place to place, he noticed two circumstances which excited his surprise and curiosity. The one, he thought, might be fancy; but the

other was positive. His pitcher of water, and the dish which contained his food, had been removed from his side while he slept, and now stood near the door. Were he even inclined to doubt this, by supposing he had mistaken the spot where he saw them over night, he could not; for the pitcher now in his dungeon was neither of the same form nor color as the other, while the food was changed for some other of better quality. He had been visited therefore during the night. But how had the person obtained entrance? Could he have slept so soundly that the unlocking and opening of those ponderous portals were effected without waking him? He would have said this was not possible, but that, in doing so, he must admit a greater difficulty, an entrance by other means, of which, he was convinced, none existed. It was not intended, then, that he should be left to perish from hunger; but the secret and mysterious mode of supplying him with food seemed to indicate he was to have no opportunity of communicating with a human being.

The other circumstance which had attracted his notice was the disappearance, as he believed, of one of the seven grated windows that ran along the top of his prison. He felt confident that he had observed and counted them; for he was rather surprised at their number, and there was something peculiar in their form, as well as in the manner of their arrangement, at unequal distances. It was so much easier, however, to suppose he was mistaken, than that a portion of the solid iron, which formed the walls, could have escaped from its position, that he soon dismissed the thought from his mind.

Vivenzio partook of the food that was before him without apprehension. It might be poisoned ; but, if it were, he knew he could not escape death, should such be the design of Tolfi ; and the quickest death would be the speediest relief.

The day passed wearily and gloomily, though not without a faint hope that, by keeping watch at night, he might observe when the person came again to bring him food, which he supposed he would do in the same way as before. The mere thought of being approached by a living creature, and the opportunity it might present of learning the doom prepared or preparing for him, imparted some comfort. Besides, if he came alone, might he not in a furious onset overpower him ? Or he might be accessible to pity, or the influence of such munificent rewards as he could bestow if once more at liberty, and master of himself. Say he were armed. The worst that could befall, if nor bribe nor prayers nor force prevailed, was a faithful blow, which, though dealt in a damned cause, might work a desired end. There was no chance so desperate but it looked lovely in Vivenzio's eyes, compared with the idea of being totally abandoned.

The night came, and Vivenzio watched. Morning came, and Vivenzio was confounded ! He must have slumbered without knowing it. Sleep must have stolen over him when exhausted by fatigue ; and, in that interval of feverish repose, he had been baffled : for there stood his replenished pitcher of water, and there his day's meal ! Nor was this all. Casting his looks toward the windows of his dungeon, he counted but **FIVE** ! *Here* was no deception ; and he was now convinced there

had been none the day before. But what did all this portend? Into what strange and mysterious den had he been cast? He gazed till his eyes ached; he could discover nothing to explain the mystery. That it was so, he knew. Why it was so, he racked his imagination in vain to conjecture. He examined the doors. A simple circumstance convinced him they had not been opened.

A wisp of straw, which he had carelessly thrown against them the preceding day, as he paced to and fro, remained where he had cast it, though it must have been displaced by the slightest motion of either of the doors. This was evidence that could not be disputed; and it followed there must be some secret machinery in the walls by which a person could enter. He inspected them closely. They appeared to him one solid and compact mass of iron; or joined, if joined they were, with such nice art that no mark of division was perceptible. Again and again he surveyed them, and the floor and the roof, and that range of visionary windows, as he was now almost tempted to consider them: he could discover nothing, absolutely nothing, to relieve his doubts or satisfy his curiosity. Sometimes he fancied that altogether the dungeon had a more contracted appearance,—that it looked smaller; but this he ascribed to fancy, and the impression naturally produced upon his mind by the undeniable disappearance of two of the windows.

With intense anxiety, Vivenzio looked forward to the return of night; and, as it approached, he resolved that no treacherous sleep should again betray him. Instead of seeking his bed of straw, he continued to walk up and

down his dungeon till daylight, straining his eyes in every direction through the darkness, to watch for any appearances that might explain these mysteries. While thus engaged, and, as nearly as he could judge (by the time that afterward elapsed before the morning came in), about two o'clock, there was a slight, tremulous motion of the floors. He stooped. The motion lasted nearly a minute: but it was so extremely gentle that he almost doubted whether it was real, or only imaginary. He listened. Not a sound could be heard. Presently, however, he felt a rush of cold air blow upon him; and, dashing toward the quarter whence it seemed to proceed, he stumbled over something which he judged to be the water ewer. The rush of cold air was no longer perceptible; and, as Vivenzio stretched out his hands, he found himself close to the walls. He remained motionless for a considerable time; but nothing occurred during the remainder of the night to excite his attention, though he continued to watch with unabated vigilance.

The first approaches of the morning were visible through the grated windows, breaking, with faint divisions of light, the darkness that still pervaded every other part, long before Vivenzio was enabled to distinguish any object in his dungeon. Instinctively and fearfully he turned his eyes, hot and inflamed with watching, toward them. There were four! He could *see* only four: but it might be that some intervening object prevented the fifth from becoming perceptible; and he waited impatiently to ascertain if it were so. As the light strengthened, however, and penetrated every corner of the cell, other objects of amazement struck his sight. On the

ground lay the broken fragments of the pitcher he had used the day before, and, at a small distance from them, nearer to the wall, stood the one he had noticed the first night. It was filled with water, and beside it was his food. He was now certain, that, by some mechanical contrivance, an opening was obtained through the iron wall, and that through this opening the current of air had found entrance. But how noiseless! for, had a feather even waved at the time, he must have heard it. Again he examined that part of the wall; but both to sight and touch it appeared one even and uniform surface, while, to repeated and violent blows, there was no reverberating sound indicative of hollowness.

This perplexing mystery had for a time withdrawn his thoughts from the windows; but now, directing his eyes again toward them, he saw that the fifth had disappeared in the same manner as the preceding two, without the least distinguishable alteration of external appearances. The remaining four looked as the seven had originally looked; that is, occupying at irregular distances the top of the wall on that side of the dungeon. The tall folding-door, too, still seemed to stand beneath, in the centre of these four, as it had first stood in the centre of the seven. But he could no longer doubt what, on the preceding day, he fancied might be the effect of visual deception. The dungeon *was* smaller. The roof had lowered; and the opposite ends had contracted the intermediate distance by a space equal, he thought, to that over which the three windows had extended. He was bewildered in vain imaginings to account for these things. Some frightful purpose, some devilish torture of mind or body,

some unheard-of device for producing exquisite misery, lurked, he was sure, in what had taken place.

Oppressed with this belief, and distracted more by the dreadful uncertainty of whatever fate impended than he could be dismayed, he thought, by the knowledge of the worst, he sat ruminating, hour after hour, yielding his fears in succession to every haggard fancy. At last a horrible suspicion flashed suddenly across his mind, and he started up with a frantic air. “Yes!” he exclaimed, looking wildly round his dungeon, and shuddering as he spoke,—“yes! it must be so! I see it! I feel the maddening truth like scorching flames upon my brain! Eternal God! support me! it must be so! Yes, yes, *that* is to be my fate! Yon roof will descend! these walls will hem me round, and slowly, slowly, crush me in their iron arms! Lord God! look down upon me, and in mercy strike me with instant death! O fiend! O devil!—is this your revenge?”

He dashed himself upon the ground in agony, tears burst from him, and the sweat stood in large drops upon his face: he sobbed aloud, he tore his hair, he rolled about like one suffering intolerable anguish of body, and would have bitten the iron floor beneath him; he breathed fearful curses upon Tolfi, and the next moment passionate prayers to Heaven for immediate death. Then the violence of his grief became exhausted; and he lay still, weeping as a child would weep. The twilight of departing day shed its gloom around him ere he arose from that posture of utter and hopeless sorrow. He had taken no food. Not one drop of water had cooled the fever of his parched lips. Sleep had not visited his eyes

for six-and-thirty hours. He was faint with hunger; weary with watching, and with the excess of his emotions. He tasted of his food; he drank with avidity of the water, and reeling, like a drunken man, to his straw, cast himself upon it to brood again over the appalling image that had fastened itself upon his almost frenzied thoughts.

He slept; but his slumbers were not tranquil. He resisted, as long as he could, their approach; and when, at last, enfeebled nature yielded to their influence, he found no oblivion from his cares. Terrible dreams haunted him; ghastly visions harrowed up his imagination; he shouted and screamed, as if he already felt the dungeon's ponderous roof descending on him; he breathed hard and thick, as though writhing between its iron walls. Then would he spring up, stare wildly about him, stretch forth his hands to be sure he yet had space enough to live, and, muttering some incoherent words, sink down again, to pass through the same fierce vicissitudes of delirious sleep.

The morning of the fourth day dawned upon Vivenzio; but it was high noon before his mind shook off its stupor, or he awoke to a full consciousness of his situation. And what a fixed energy of despair sat upon his pale features as he cast his eyes upwards, and gazed upon the THREE windows that now alone remained! The three! where were no more! and they seemed to number his own allotted days. Slowly and calmly he next surveyed the top and sides, and comprehended all the meaning of the diminished height of the former, as well as of the gradual approximation of the latter. The contracted dimensions

of his mysterious prison were now too gross and palpable to be the juggle of his heated imagination.

Still lost in wonder at the means, Vivenzio could put no cheat upon his reason as to the end. By what horrible ingenuity it was contrived, that walls and roofs and windows should thus silently and imperceptibly, without noise and without motion, almost fold, as it were, within each other, he knew not. He only knew they did so; and he vainly strove to persuade himself it was the intention of the contriver to rack the miserable wretch who might be immured there with anticipation merely of a fate from which, in the very crisis of his agony, he was to be reprieved.

Gladly would he have clung even to this possibility, if his heart would have let him; but he felt a dreadful assurance of its fallacy. And what matchless inhumanity it was to doom the sufferer to such lingering torments; to lead him day by day to so appalling a death, unsupported by the consolations of religion, unvisited by any human being, abandoned to himself, deserted of all, and denied even the sad privilege of knowing that his cruel destiny would awaken pity! Alone he was to perish! Alone he was to wait a slow-coming torture, whose most exquisite pangs would be inflicted by that very solitude and that tardy coming.

"It is not death I fear," he exclaimed, "but the death I must prepare for! Methinks, too, I could meet even that, all horrible and revolting as it is,—if it might overtake me now. But where shall I find fortitude to tarry till it come? How can I outlive the three long days and nights I have to live? There is no power within me to

bid the hideous spectre hence ; none to make it familiar to my thoughts, or myself patient of its errand. My thoughts rather will flee from me, and I grow mad in looking at it. Oh ! for a deep sleep to fall upon me ! That so, in death's likeness, I might embrace death itself, and drink no more of the cup that is presented to me than my fainting spirit has already tasted ! ”

In the midst of these lamentations, Vivenzio noticed that his accustomed meal, with the pitcher of water, had been conveyed, as before, into his dungeon. But this circumstance no longer excited his surprise. His mind was overwhelmed with others of a far greater magnitude. It suggested, however, a feeble hope of deliverance ; and there is no hope so feeble as not to yield some support to a heart bending under despair. He resolved to watch, during the ensuing night, for the signs he had before observed, and, should he again feel the gentle, tremulous motion of the floor, or the current of air, to seize that moment for giving audible expression to his misery. Some person must be near him, and within reach of his voice, at the instant when his food was supplied ; some one, perhaps, susceptible of pity. Or, if not, to be told even that his apprehensions were just, and that his fate *was* to be what he foreboded, would be preferable to a suspense which hung upon the possibility of his worst fears being visionary.

The night came ; and, as the hour approached when Vivenzio imagined he might expect the signs, he stood fixed and silent as a statue. He feared to breathe, almost, lest he might lose any sound which would warn him of their coming. While thus listening, with every

faculty of mind and body strained to an agony of attention, it occurred to him he should be more sensible of the motion, probably, if he stretched himself along the iron floor. He accordingly laid himself softly down, and had not been long in that position when — yes — he was certain of it — the floor moved under him ! He sprang up, and, in a voice suffocated nearly with emotion, called aloud. He paused — the motion ceased — he felt no stream of air — all was hushed — no voice answered to his — he burst into tears ; and, as he sunk to the ground, in renewed anguish, exclaimed, “ O my God ! my God ! You alone have power to save me now, or strengthen me for the trial you permit.”

Another morning dawned upon the wretched captive, and the fatal index of his doom met his eyes. Two windows ! — and *two* days — and all would be over ! Fresh food — fresh water ! The mysterious visit had been paid, though he had implored it in vain. But how awfully was his prayer answered in what he now saw ! The roof of the dungeon was within a foot of his head. The two ends were so near that in six paces he trod the space between them. Vivenzio shuddered as he gazed, and as his steps traversed the narrow area ; but his feelings no longer vented themselves in frantic wailings. With folded arms, and clenched teeth ; with eyes that were blood-shot from much watching, and fixed with a vacant glare upon the ground ; with a hard, quick breathing, and a hurried walk, — he strode backward and forward in silent musing for several hours. What mind shall conceive, what tongue utter, or what pen describe, the dark and terrible character of his thoughts ? Like the fate that

moulded them, they had no similitude in the wide range of this world's agony for man. Suddenly he stopped, and his eyes were riveted upon that part of the wall which was over his bed of straw. Words are inscribed there! A human language, traced by a human hand! He rushes toward them; but his blood freezes as he reads,—

“I, Ludovicc Sforza, tempted by the gold of the Prince of Tolfi, spent three years in contriving and executing this accursed triumph of my art. When it was completed, the perfidious Tolfi, more devil than man, who conducted me hither one morning to be witness, as he said, of its perfection, doomed *me* to be the first victim of my own pernicious skill; lest, as he declared, I should divulge the secret, or repeat the effort of my ingenuity. May God pardon him, as I hope he will me, that ministered to his unhallowed purpose. Miserable wretch, whoe'er thou art, that readest these lines, fall on thy knees, and invoke, as I have done, His sustaining mercy who alone can nerve thee to meet the vengeance of Tolfi, armed with his tremendous engine which, in a few hours, must crush *you*, as it will the needy wretch who made it.”

A deep groan burst from Vivenzio. He stood, like one transfixed, with dilated eyes, expanded nostrils, and quivering lips, gazing at this fatal inscription. It was as if a voice from the sepulchre had sounded in his ears, “Prepare.” Hope forsook him. There was his sentence, recorded in those dismal words. The future stood unveiled before him, ghastly and appalling. His brain already feels the descending horror; his bones seem to crack and crumble in the mighty grasp of the iron walls!

Unknowing what it is he does, he fumbles in his garment for some weapon of self-destruction. He clenches his throat in his convulsive gripe, as though he would strangle himself at once. He stares upon the walls ; and his warring spirit demands, " Will they not anticipate their office if I dash my head against them ? " An hysterical laugh chokes him as he exclaims, " Why should I ? He was but a man who died first in their fierce embrace ; and I should be less than man not to do as much ! "

The evening sun was descending, and Vivenzio beheld its golden beams streaming through one of the windows. What a thrill of joy shot through his soul at the sight ! It was a precious link that united him, for the moment, with the world beyond. There was ecstasy in the thought.

As he gazed, long and earnestly, it seemed as if the windows had lowered sufficiently for him to reach them. With one bound, he was beneath them ; with one wild spring, he clung to the bars. Whether it was so contrived, purposely to madden with delight the wretch who looked, he knew not ; but, at the extremity of a long vista cut through the solid rocks, the ocean, the sky, the setting sun, olive groves, shady walks, and, in the farthest distance, delicious glimpses of magnificent Sicily, burst upon his sight. How exquisite was the cool breeze as it swept across his cheek, loaded with fragrance ! He inhaled it as though it were the breath of continued life. And there was a freshness in the landscape, and in the rippling of the calm, green sea, that fell upon his withering heart like dew upon the parched earth. How he gazed, and panted, and still clung to his hold ! some-

times hanging by one hand, sometimes by the other, and then grasping the bars with both, as loath to quit the smiling paradise outstretched before him; till, exhausted, and his hands swollen and benumbed, he dropped helpless down, and lay stunned for a considerable time by the fall.

When he recovered, the glorious vision had vanished. He was in darkness. He doubted whether it was not a dream that had passed before his sleeping fancy; but gradually his scattered thoughts returned, and with them came remembrance. Yes! he had looked once again upon the gorgeous splendor of nature! Once again his eyes had trembled beneath their veiled lids at the sun's radiance, and sought repose in the soft verdure of the olive-tree or the gentle swell of undulating waves. O that he were a mariner, exposed upon those waves to the worst fury of storm and tempest, or a very wretch, loathsome with disease, plague-stricken, and his body one leprous contagion from crown to sole, hunted forth to gasp out the remnant of infectious life beneath those verdant trees, so he might shun the destiny upon whose edge he tottered!

Vain thoughts like these would steal over his mind from time to time, in spite of himself; but they scarcely moved it from that stupor into which it had sunk, and which kept him, during the whole night, like one who had been drugged with opium. He was equally insensible to the calls of hunger and of thirst, though the third day was now commencing since even a drop of water had passed his lips. He remained on the ground, sometimes sitting, sometimes lying; at intervals sleeping heavily, and, when

not sleeping, silently brooding over what was to come, or talking aloud, in disordered speech, of his wrongs, of his friends, of his home, and of those he loved, with a confused mingling of all.

In this pitiable condition, the sixth and last morning dawned upon Vivenzio, if dawn it might be called, — the dim, obscure light which faintly struggled through the ONE SOLITARY window of his dungeon. He could hardly be said to notice the melancholy token. And yet he did notice it; for, as he raised his eyes and saw the portentous sign, there was a slight convulsive distortion of his countenance. But what did attract his notice, and at the sight of which his agitation was excessive, was the change the iron bed had undergone. It was a bed no longer. It stood before him, the visible semblance of a funeral couch or bier! When he beheld this, he started from the ground; and, in raising himself, suddenly struck his head against the roof, which was now so low that he could no longer stand upright. “God’s will be done!” was all he said, as he crouched his body, and placed his hand upon the bier; for such it was. The iron bedstead had been so contrived, by the mechanical art of Ludovico Sforza, that, as the advancing walls came in contact with its head and feet, a pressure was produced upon concealed springs, which, when made to play, set in motion a very simple though ingeniously contrived machinery that effected the transformation. The object was, of course, to heighten, in the closing scene of this horrible drama, all the feelings of despair and anguish which the preceding one had aroused. For the same reason, the last window was so made as to admit only a shadowy

kind of gloom rather than light, that the wretched captive might be surrounded, as it were, with every seeming preparation for approaching death.

Vivenzio seated himself on his bier. Then he knelt and prayed fervently; and sometimes tears would gush from him. The air seemed thick, and he breathed with difficulty; or it might be that he fancied it was so, from the hot and narrow limits of his dungeon, which were now so diminished that he could neither stand up nor lie down at his full length. But his wasted spirits and oppressed mind no longer struggled with him. He was past hope, and fear shook him no more. Happy if thus revenge had struck its final blow; for he would have fallen beneath it almost unconscious of a pang. But such a lethargy of the soul, after such an excitement of its fiercest passions, had entered into the diabolical calculations of Tolfi; and the fell artificer of his designs had imagined a counteracting device.

The tolling of an enormous bell struck upon the ears of Vivenzio! He started. It beat but once. The sound was so close and stunning that it seemed to shatter his very brain, while it echoed through the rocky passages like reverberating peals of thunder. This was followed by a sudden crash of the roof and walls, as if they were about to fall upon and close around him at once. Vivenzio screamed, and instinctively spread forth his arms, as though he had a giant's strength to hold them back. They had moved nearer to him, and were now motionless. Vivenzio looked up, and saw the roof almost touching his head, even as he sat cowering beneath it; and he felt that a further contraction of but a

few inches only must commence the frightful operation. Roused as he had been, he now gasped for breath. His body shook violently; he was bent nearly double. His hands rested upon either wall, and his feet were drawn under him to avoid the pressure in front. Thus he remained for more than an hour, when that deafening bell beat again, and again came the crash of horrid death. But the concussion was now so great that it struck Vivenzio down. As he lay gathered up in lessened bulk, the bell beat loud and frequent; crash succeeded crash; and on and on and on came the mysterious engine of death, till Vivenzio's smothered groans were heard no more. He was horribly crushed by the ponderous roof and collapsing sides; and the flattened bier was his iron shroud.





THE BELL-TOWER.

BY HERMAN MELVILLE.

TN the South of Europe, nigh a once frescoed capital, now with dank mould cankering its bloom, central in a plain, stands what, at distance, seems the black mossed stump of some immeasurable pine, fallen, in forgotten days, with Anak and the Titan.

As all along where the pine-tree falls its dissolution leaves a mossy mound,—last-flung shadow of the perished trunk, never lengthening, never lessening, unsub-ject to the fleet falsities of the sun, shade immutable, and true gauge which cometh by prostration,—so west-ward from what seems the stump, one steadfast spear of lichenied ruin veins the plain.

From that tree-top, what birded chimes of silver throats had rung. A stone pine; a metallic aviary in its crown: the Bell-Tower, built by the great mechanician, the un-blessed foundling, Bannadonna.

Like Babel's, its base was laid in a high hour of reno-vated earth, following the second deluge, when the wa-ters of the Dark Ages had dried up, and once more the

green appeared. No wonder that, after so long and deep submersion, the jubilant expectation of the race should, as with Noah's sons, soar into Shinar aspiration.

In firm resolve, no man in Europe at that period went beyond Bannadonna. Enriched through commerce with the Levant, the state in which he lived voted to have the noblest bell-tower in Italy. His repute assigned him to be architect.

Stone by stone, month by month, the tower rose. Higher, higher; snail-like in pace, but torch or rocket in its pride.

After the masons would depart, the builder, standing alone upon its ever-ascending summit, at close of every day, saw that he overtopped still higher walls and trees. He would tarry till a late hour there, wrapped in schemes of other and still loftier piles. Those who of saints' days thronged the spot, — hanging to the rude poles of scaffolding, like sailors on yards or bees on boughs, unmindful of lime and dust and falling chips of stone, — their homage not the less inspirited him to self-esteem.

At length the holiday of the Tower came. To the sound of viols, the climax-stone slowly rose in air, and, amid the firing of ordnance, was laid by Bannadonna's hands upon the final course. Then mounting it, he stood erect, alone, with folded arms, gazing upon the white summits of blue inland Alps, and whiter crests of bluer Alps off-shore, — sights invisible from the plain. Invisible, too, from thence was that eye he turned below, when, like the cannon-booms, came up to him the people's combustions of applause.

That which stirred them so was, seeing with what serenity the builder stood three hundred feet in air, upon an unrailed perch. This none but he durst do. But his periodic standing upon the pile, in each stage of its growth,—such discipline had its last result.

Little remained now but the bells. These, in all respects, must correspond with their receptacle.

The minor ones were prosperously cast. A highly enriched one followed, of a singular make, intended for suspension in a manner before unknown. The purpose of this bell, its rotary motion, and connection with the clock-work, also executed at the time, will, in the sequel, receive mention.

In the one erection, bell-tower and clock-tower were united, though before that period such structures had commonly been built distinct; as the Campanile and Torre dell' Orologio of St. Mark to this day attest.

But it was upon the great state-bell that the founder lavished his more daring skill. In vain did some of the less elated magistrates here caution him, saying that, though truly the tower was Titanic, yet limit should be set to the dependent weight of its swaying masses. But undeterred he prepared his mammoth mould, dented with mythological devices; kindled his fires of balsamic firs; melted his tin and copper, and, throwing in much plate contributed by the public spirit of the nobles, let loose the tide.

The unleashed metals bayed like hounds. The workmen shrunk. Through their fright, fatal harm to the bell was dreaded. Fearless as Shadrach, Bannadonna, rushing through the glow, smote the chief culprit with

his ponderous ladle. From the smitten part a splinter was dashed into the seething mass, and at once was melted in.

Next day a portion of the work was heedfully uncovered. All seemed right. Upon the third morning, with equal satisfaction, it was bared still lower. At length, like some old Theban king, the whole cooled casting was disinterred. All was fair except in one strange spot. But as he suffered no one to attend him in these inspections, he concealed the blemish by some preparation which none knew better to devise.

The casting of such a mass was deemed no small triumph for the caster; one, too, in which the state might not scorn to share. The homicide was overlooked. By the charitable that deed was but imputed to sudden transports of æsthetic passion, not to any flagitious quality,—a kick from an Arabian charger; not sign of vice, but blood. His felony remitted by the judge, absolution given him by the priest, what more could even a sickly conscience have desired?

Honoring the tower and its builder with another holiday, the republic witnessed the hoisting of the bells and clock-work amid shows and pomps superior to the former.

Some months of more than usual solitude on Bannadonna's part ensued. It was not unknown that he was engaged upon something for the belfry, intended to complete it, and to surpass all that had gone before. Most people imagined that the design would involve a casting like the bells. But those who thought they had some further insight would shake their heads, with hints that

not for nothing did the mechanician keep so secret. Meantime, his seclusion failed not to invest his work with more or less of that sort of mystery pertaining to the forbidden.

Ere long he had a heavy object hoisted to the belfry, wrapped in a dark sack or cloak,—a procedure sometimes had in the case of an elaborate piece of sculpture or statue, which, being intended to grace the front of a new edifice, the architect does not desire exposed to critical eyes, till set up, finished, in its appointed place. Such was the impression now. But, as the object rose, a statuary present observed, or thought he did, that it was not entirely rigid, but was, in a manner, pliant. At last, when the hidden thing had attained its final height, and, obscurely seen from below, seemed almost of itself to step into the belfry as if with little assistance from the crane, a shrewd old blacksmith present ventured the suspicion that it was but a living man. This surmise was thought a foolish one, while the general interest failed not to augment.

Not without demur from Bannadonna, the chief magistrate of the town, with an associate,—both elderly men,—followed what seemed the image up the tower. But, arrived at the belfry, they had little recompense. Plausibly intrenching himself behind the conceded mysteries of his art, the mechanician withheld present explanation. The magistrates glanced toward the cloaked object, which, to their surprise, seemed now to have changed its attitude, or else had before been more perplexingly concealed by the violent muffling action of the wind without. It seemed now seated upon some sort of

frame or chair contained within the domino. They observed that nigh the top, in a sort of square, the web of the cloth, either from accident or from design, had its warp partly withdrawn, and the cross-threads plucked out here and there, so as to form a sort of woven grating. Whether it were the low wind or no, stealing through the stone lattice-work, or only their own perturbed imaginations, is uncertain, but they thought they discerned a slight sort of fitful, spring-like motion, in the domino. Nothing, however incidental or insignificant, escaped their uneasy eyes. Among other things, they pried out, in a corner, an earthen cup, partly corroded and partly incrusted, and one whispered to the other that this cup was just such a one as might, in mockery, be offered to the lips of some brazen statue, or, perhaps, still worse.

But, being questioned, the mechanician said that the cup was simply used in his founder's business, and described the purpose; in short, a cup to test the condition of metals in fusion. He added that it had got into the belfry by the merest chance.

Again and again they gazed at the domino, as at some suspicious incognito at a Venetian mask. All sorts of vague apprehensions stirred them. They even dreaded lest, when they should descend, the mechanician, though without a flesh-and-blood companion, for all that, would not be left alone.

Affecting some merriment at their disquietude, he begged to relieve them, by extending a coarse sheet of workman's canvas between them and the object.

Meantime he sought to interest them in his other

work; nor, now that the domino was out of sight, did they long remain insensible to the artistic wonders lying round them; wonders hitherto beheld but in their unfinished state; because, since hoisting the bells, none but the caster had entered within the belfry. It was one trait of his that, even in details, he would not let another do what he could, without too great loss of time, accomplish for himself. So, for several preceding weeks, whatever hours were unemployed in his secret design, had been devoted to elaborating the figures on the bells.

The clock-bell, in particular, now drew attention. Under a patient chisel, the latent beauty of its enrichments, before obscured by the cloudings incident to casting, that beauty in its shiest grace, was now revealed. Round and round the bell, twelve figures of gay girls, garlanded, hand-in-hand, danced in a choral ring,—the embodied hours.

"Bannadonna," said the chief, "this bell excels all else. No added touch could here improve. Hark!" hearing a sound, "was that the wind?"

"The wind, Eccellenza," was the light response. "But the figures, they are not yet without their faults. They need some touches yet. When those are given, and the—block yonder," pointing toward the canvas screen, "when Haman there, as I merrily call him,—him? *it*, I mean,—when Haman is fixed on this, his lofty tree, then, gentlemen, shall I be most happy to receive you here again."

The equivocal reference to the object caused some return of restlessness. However, on their part, the visitors forbore further allusion to it, unwilling, perhaps, to

let the foundling see how easily it lay within his plebeian art to stir the placid dignity of nobles.

"Well, Bannadonna," said the chief, "how long ere you are ready to set the clock going, so that the hour shall be sounded? Our interest in you, not less than in the work itself, makes us anxious to be assured of your success. The people, too,—why, they are shouting now. Say the exact hour when you will be ready."

"To-morrow, Eccellenza, if you listen for it,—or should you not, all the same,—strange music will be heard. The stroke of one shall be the first from yonder bell," pointing to the bell adorned with girls and garlands; "that stroke shall fall there, where the hand of Una clasps Dua's. The stroke of one shall sever that loved clasp. To-morrow, then, at one o'clock, as struck here, precisely here," advancing and placing his finger upon the clasp, "the poor mechanic will be most happy once more to give you liege audience, in this his littered shop. Farewell till then, illustrious magnificoes, and hark ye for your vassal's stroke."

His still, Vulcanic face hiding its burning brightness like a forge, he moved with ostentatious deference toward the scuttle, as if so far to escort their exit. But the junior magistrate, a kind-hearted man, troubled at what seemed to him a certain sardonical disdain, lurking beneath the foundling's humble mien, and in Christian sympathy more distressed at it on his account than on his own, dimly surmising what might be the final fate of such a cynic solitaire, nor perhaps uninfluenced by the general strangeness of surrounding things,—this good magistrate had glanced sadly, sidewise from the speaker,

and thereupon his foreboding eye had started at the expression of the unchanging face of the hour Una.

"How is this, Bannadonna?" he lowly asked, "Una looks unlike her sisters."

"In Christ's name, Bannadonna," impulsively broke in the chief, his attention for the first time attracted to the figure by his associate's remark, "Una's face looks just like that of Deborah, the prophetess, as painted by the Florentine, Del Fonca."

"Surely, Bannadonna," lowly resumed the milder magistrate, "you meant the twelve should wear the same jocundly abandoned air. But see, the smile of Una seems but a fatal one. 'T is different."

While his mild associate was speaking, the chief glanced, inquiringly, from him to the caster, as if anxious to mark how the discrepancy would be accounted for. As the chief stood, his advanced foot was on the scuttle's curb. Bannadonna spoke:—

"Excellenza, now that, following your keener eye, I glance upon the face of Una, I do, indeed, perceive some little variance. But look all round the bell, and you will find no two faces entirely correspond. Because there is a law in art— But the cold wind is rising more; these lattices are but a poor defence. Suffer me, magnificoes, to conduct you at least partly on your way. Those in whose well-being there is a public stake should be heedfully attended."

"Touching the look of Una, you were saying, Bannadonna, that there was a certain law in art," observed the chief, as the three now descended the stone shaft, "pray, tell me, then—"

"Pardon — another time, Eccellenza ; the tower is damp."

"Nay, I must rest, and hear it now. Here, — here is a wide landing, and through this leeward slit no wind, but ample light. Tell us of your law, and at large."

"Since, Eccellenza, you insist, know that there is a law in art, which bars the possibility of duplicates. Some years ago, you may remember, I graved a small seal for your republic, bearing, for its chief device, the head of your own ancestor, its illustrious founder. It becoming necessary, for the customs' use, to have innumerable impressions for bales and boxes, I graved an entire plate, containing one hundred of the seals. Now, though, indeed, my object was to have those hundred heads identical, and though, I dare say, people think them so, yet, upon closely scanning an uncut impression from the plate, no two of those five-score faces, side by side, will be found alike. Gravity is the air of all ; but diversified in all. In some, benevolent ; in some, ambiguous ; in two or three, to a close scrutiny, all but incipiently malign, the variation of less than a hair's breadth in the linear shadings round the mouth sufficing to all this. Now, Eccellenza, transmute that general gravity into joyousness, and subject it to twelve of those variations I have described, and tell me, will you not have my hours here, and Una one of them ? But I like — "

"Hark ! is that — a footfall above ? "

"Mortar, Eccellenza ; sometimes it drops to the belfry-floor from the arch where the stonework was left undressed. I must have it seen to. As I was about to say : for one, I like this law forbidding duplicates. It

evokes fine personalities. Yes, Eccellenza, that strange and — to you — uncertain smile, and those fore-looking eyes of Una, suit Bannadonna very well.”

“ Hark ! — sure, we left no soul above ? ”

“ No soul, Eccellenza ; rest assured, no *soul*. Again the mortar.”

“ It fell not while we were there.”

“ Ah, in your presence, it better knew its place, Eccellenza,” blandly bowed Bannadonna.

“ But Una,” said the milder magistrate, “ she seemed intently gazing on you ; one would have almost sworn that she picked you out from among us three.”

“ If she did, possibly it might have been her finer apprehension, Eccellenza.”

“ How, Bannadonna ? I do not understand you.”

“ No consequence, no consequence, Eccellenza : but the shifted wind is blowing through the slit. Suffer me to escort you on ; and then, pardon, but the toiler must to his tools.”

“ It may be foolish, Signor,” said the milder magistrate, as, from the third landing, the two now went down unescorted, “ but, somehow, our great mechanician moves me strangely. Why, just now, when he so superciliously replied, his walk seemed Sisera’s, God’s vain foe, in Del Fonca’s painting. And that young, sculptured Deborah, too. Ay, and that — ”

“ Tush, tush, Signor ! ” returned the chief. “ A passing whim. Deborah ? — Where’s Jael, pray ? ”

“ Ah,” said the other, as they now stepped upon the sod, — “ ah, Signor, I see you leave your fears behind you with the chill and gloom ; but mine, even in this sunny air, remain. Hark ! ”

It was a sound from just within the tower door, whence they had emerged. Turning, they saw it closed.

"He has slipped down and barred us out," smiled the chief; "but it is his custom."

Proclamation was now made that the next day, at one hour after meridian, the clock would strike, and — thanks to the mechanician's powerful art — with unusual accompaniments. But what those should be, none as yet could say. The announcement was received with cheers.

By the looser sort, who encamped about the tower all night, lights were seen gleaming through the topmost blind-work, only disappearing with the morning sun. Strange sounds, too, were heard, or were thought to be, by those whom anxious watching might not have left mentally undisturbed, — sounds, not only of some ringing implement, but also — so they said — half-suppressed screams and plainings, such as might have issued from some ghostly engine overplied.

Slowly the day drew on; part of the concourse chasing the weary time with songs and games, till, at last, the great blurred sun rolled, like a football, against the plain.

At noon, the nobility and principal citizens came from the town in cavalcade, a guard of soldiers, also, with music, the more to honor the occasion.

Only one hour more. Impatience grew. Watches were held in hands of feverish men, who stood, now scrutinizing their small dial-plates, and then, with neck thrown back, gazing toward the belfry, as if the eye might foretell that which could only be made sensible

to the ear ; for, as yet, there was no dial to the tower-clock.

The hour-hands of a thousand watches now verged within a hair's breadth of the figure 1. A silence, as of the expectation of some Shiloh, pervaded the swarming plain. Suddenly a dull, mangled sound, — naught ringing in it ; scarcely audible, indeed, to the outer circles of the people, — that dull sound dropped heavily from the belfry. At the same moment, each man stared at his neighbor blankly. All watches were upheld. All hour-hands were at — had passed — the figure 1. No bell-stroke from the tower. The multitude became tumultuous.

Waiting a few moments, the chief magistrate, commanding silence, hailed the belfry, to know what thing unforeseen had happened there.

No response.

He hailed again and yet again.

All continued hushed.

By his order, the soldiers burst in the tower-door ; when, stationing guards to defend it from the now surging mob, the chief, accompanied by his former associate, climbed the winding stairs. Half-way up, they stopped to listen. No sound. Mounting faster, they reached the belfry, but, at the threshold, started at the spectacle disclosed. A spaniel, which, unbeknown to them, had followed them thus far, stood shivering as before some unknown monster in a brake ; or, rather, as if it snuffed footsteps leading to some other world.

Bannadonna lay, prostrate and bleeding, at the base of the bell which was adorned with girls and garlands.

He lay at the feet of the hour Una ; his head coinciding, in a vertical line, with her left hand, clasped by the hour Dua. With downcast face impending over him, like Jael over nailed Sisera in the tent, was the domino ; now no more becloaked.

It had limbs, and seemed clad in a scaly mail, lustrous as a dragon-beetle's. It was manacled, and its clubbed arms were uplifted, as if, with its manacles, once more to smite its already smitten victim. One advanced foot of it was inserted beneath the dead body, as if in the act of spurning it.

Uncertainty falls on what now followed.

It were but natural to suppose that the magistrates would, at first, shrink from immediate personal contact with what they saw. At the least, for a time, they would stand in involuntary doubt ; it may be, in more or less of horrified alarm. Certain it is, that an arquebuse was called for from below. And some add that its report, followed by a fierce whiz, as of the sudden snapping of a main-spring, with a steely din, as if a stack of sword-blades should be dashed upon a pavement, — these blended sounds came ringing to the plain, attracting every eye far upward to the belfry, whence, through the lattice-work, thin wreaths of smoke were curling.

Some averred that it was the spaniel, gone mad by fear, which was shot. This, others denied. True, it was, the spaniel never more was seen ; and, probably, for some unknown reason, it shared the burial now to be related of the domino. For, whatever the preceding circumstances may have been, the first instinctive panic over, or else all ground of reasonable fear removed, the

two magistrates, by themselves, quickly re-hooded the figure in the dropped cloak wherein it had been hoisted. The same night, it was secretly lowered to the ground, smuggled to the beach, pulled far out to sea, and sunk. Nor to any after urgency, even in free convivial hours, would the twain ever disclose the full secrets of the belfry.

From the mystery unavoidably investing it, the popular solution of the foundling's fate involved more or less of supernatural agency. But some few less unscientific minds pretended to find little difficulty in otherwise accounting for it. In the chain of circumstantial inferences drawn, there may or may not have been some absent or defective links. But, as the explanation in question is the only one which tradition has explicitly preserved, in dearth of better, it will here be given. But, in the first place, it is requisite to present the supposition entertained as to the entire motive and mode, with their origin, of the secret design of Bannadonna; the minds above mentioned assuming to penetrate as well into his soul as into the event. The disclosure will indirectly involve reference to peculiar matters, none of the clearest, beyond the immediate subject.

At that period, no large bell was made to sound otherwise than as at present, — by agitation of a tongue within, by means of ropes, or percussion from without, either from cumbrous machinery, or stalwart watchmen, armed with heavy hammers, stationed in the belfry, or in sentry-boxes on the open roof, according as the bell was sheltered or exposed.

It was from observing these exposed bells, with their

watchmen, that the foundling, as was opined, derived the first suggestion of his scheme. Perched on a great mast or spire, the human figure viewed from below undergoes such a reduction in its apparent size as to obliterate its intelligent features. It evinces no personality. Instead of bespeaking volition, its gestures rather resemble the automatic ones of the arms of a telegraph.

Musing, therefore, upon the purely Punchinello aspect of the human figure thus beheld, it had indirectly occurred to Bannadonna to devise some metallic agent, which should strike the hour with its mechanic hand, with even greater precision than the vital one. And, moreover, as the vital watchman on the roof, sallying from his retreat at the given periods, walked to the bell with uplifted mace to smite it, Bannadonna had resolved that his invention should likewise possess the power of locomotion, and, along with that, the appearance, at least, of intelligence and will.

If the conjectures of those who claimed acquaintance with the intent of Bannadonna be thus far correct, no unenterprising spirit could have been his. But they stopped not here; intimating that though, indeed, his design had, in the first place, been prompted by the sight of the watchman, and confined to the devising of a subtle substitute for him, yet, as is not seldom the case with projectors, by insensible gradations, proceeding from comparatively pygmy aims to Titanic ones, the original scheme had, in its anticipated eventualities, at last attained to an unheard-of degree of daring. He still bent his efforts upon the locomotive figure for the belfry, but only as a partial type of an ulterior creature, a sort of

elephantine Helot, adapted to further, in a degree scarcely to be imagined, the universal conveniences and glories of humanity; supplying nothing less than a supplement to the Six Days' Work; stocking the earth with a new serf, more useful than the ox, swifter than the dolphin, stronger than the lion, more cunning than the ape, for industry an ant, more fiery than serpents, and yet, in patience, another ass. All excellences of all God-made creatures, which served man, were here to receive advancement, and then to be combined in one. Talus was to have been the all-accomplished Helot's name. Talus, iron slave to Bannadonna, and, through him, to man.

Here it might well be thought that, were these last conjectures as to the foundling's secrets not erroneous, then must he have been hopelessly infected with the craziest chimeras of his age, far outgoing Albert Magus and Cornelius Agrippa. But the contrary was averred. However marvellous his design, however apparently transcending not alone the bounds of human invention, but those of divine creation, yet the proposed means to be employed were alleged to have been confined within the sober forms of sober reason. It was affirmed that, to a degree of more than sceptic scorn, Bannadonna had been without sympathy for any of the vainglorious irrationalities of his time. For example, he had not concluded, with the visionaries among the metaphysicians, that between the finer mechanic forces and the ruder animal vitality some germ of correspondence might prove discoverable. As little did his scheme partake of the enthusiasm of some natural philosophers, who hoped, by physiological and chemical inductions, to arrive at a knowledge of the

source of life, and so qualify themselves to manufacture and improve upon it. Much less had he aught in common with the tribe of alchemists, who sought, by a species of incantations, to evoke some surprising vitality from the laboratory. Neither had he imagined, with certain sanguine theosophists, that, by faithful adoration of the Highest, unheard-of powers would be vouchsafed to man. A practical materialist, what Bannadonna had aimed at was to have been reached, not by logic, not by crucible, not by conjuration, not by altars ; but by plain vice-bench and hammer. In short, to solve Nature, to steal into her, to intrigue beyond her, to procure some one else to bind her to his hand, — these, one and all, had not been his objects ; but, asking no favors from any element or any being, of himself to rival her, outstrip her, and rule her. He stooped to conquer. With him, common-sense was theurgy ; machinery, miracle ; Prometheus, the heroic name for machinist ; man, the true God.

Nevertheless, in his initial step, so far as the experimental automaton for the belfry was concerned, he allowed fancy some little play ; or, perhaps, what seemed his fancifulness was but his utilitarian ambition collaterally extended. In figure, the creature for the belfry should not be likened after the human pattern, nor any animal one, nor after the ideals, however wild, of ancient fable, but equally in aspect as in organism be an original production ; the more terrible to behold, the better.

Such, then, were the suppositions as to the present scheme, and the reserved intent. How, at the very threshold, so unlooked-for a catastrophe overturned all,

or rather, what was the conjecture here, is now to be set forth.

It was thought that on the day preceding the fatality, his visitors having left him, Bannadonna had unpacked the belfry image, adjusted it, and placed it in the retreat provided,—a sort of sentry-box in one corner of the belfry; in short, throughout the night, and for some part of the ensuing morning, he had been engaged in arranging everything connected with the domino: the issuing from the sentry-box each sixty minutes; sliding along a grooved way, like a railway; advancing to the clock-bell, with uplifted manacles; striking it at one of the twelve junctions of the four-and-twenty hands; then wheeling, circling the bell, and retiring to its post, there to bide for another sixty minutes, when the same process was to be repeated; the bell, by a cunning mechanism, meantime turning on its vertical axis, so as to present, to the descending mace, the clasped hands of the next two figures, when it would strike two, three, and so on, to the end. The musical metal in this time-bell was so managed in the fusion, by some art, perishing with its originator, that each of the clasps of the four-and-twenty hands should give forth its own peculiar resonance when parted.

But on the magic metal, the magic and metallic stranger never struck but that one stroke, drove but that one nail, severed but that one clasp, by which Bannadonna clung to his ambitious life. For, after winding up the creature in the sentry-box, so that, for the present, skipping the intervening hours, it should not emerge till the hour of one, but should then infallibly emerge, and, after

deftly oiling the grooves whereon it was to slide, it was surmised that the mechanician must then have hurried to the bell, to give his final touches to its sculpture. True artist, he here became absorbed, — an absorption still further intensified, it may be, by his striving to abate that strange look of Una; which, though before others he had treated it with such unconcern, might not, in secret, have been without its thorn.

And so, for the interval, he was oblivious of his creature; which, not oblivious of him, and true to its creation, and true to its heedful winding up, left its post precisely at the given moment; along its well-oiled route, slid noiselessly toward its mark; and, aiming at the hand of Una, to ring one clangorous note, dully smote the intervening brain of Bannadonna, turned backward to it; the manacled arms then instantly upspringing to their hovering poise. The falling body clogged the thing's return; so there it stood, still impending over Bannadonna, as if whispering some post-mortem terror. The chisel lay dropped from the hand, but beside the hand; the oil-flask spilled across the iron track.

In his unhappy end, not unmindful of the rare genius of the mechanician, the republic decreed him a stately funeral. It was resolved that the great bell — the one whose casting had been jeopardized through the timidity of the ill-starred workman — should be rung upon the entrance of the bier into the cathedral. The most robust man of the country round was assigned the office of bell-ringer.

But as the pall-bearers entered the cathedral porch, naught but a broken and disastrous sound, like that of

some lone Alpine land-slide, fell from the tower upon their ears. And then, all was hushed.

Glancing backward, they saw the groined belfry crushed sidewise in. It afterward appeared that the powerful peasant who had the bell-rope in charge, wishing to test at once the full glory of the bell, had swayed down upon the rope with one concentrate jerk. The mass of quaking metal, too ponderous for its frame, and strangely feeble somewhere at its top, loosed from its fastening, tore sidewise down, and tumbling in one sheer fall, three hundred feet to the soft sward below, buried itself inverted and half out of sight.

Upon its disinterment, the main fracture was found to have started from a small spot in the ear; which, being scraped, revealed a defect, deceptively minute, in the casting; which defect must subsequently have been pasted over with some unknown compound.

The re-molten metal soon reassumed its place in the tower's repaired superstructure. For one year the metallic choir of birds sang musically in its belfry-bough-work of sculptured blinds and traceries. But on the first anniversary of the tower's completion,—at early dawn, before the concourse had surrounded it,—an earthquake came; one loud crash was heard. The stone-pine, with all its bower of songsters, lay overthrown upon the plain.

So the blind slave obeyed its blinder lord; but, in obedience, slew him. So the creator was killed by the creature. So the bell was too heavy for the tower. So the bell's main weakness was where man's blood had flawed it. And so pride went before the fall.



THE KATHAYAN SLAVE.

BY EMILY C. JUDSON.

AT the commencement of the English and Burmese war of 1824, all the Christians (called "hat-wearers," in contradistinction from the turbaned heads of the Orientals) residing at Ava were thrown unceremoniously into the death-prison. Among them were both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries; some few reputable European traders; and criminals shadowed from the laws of Christendom "under the sole of the golden foot." These, Americans, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, and Armenian, were all huddled together in one prison, with villains of every grade,—the thief, the assassin, the bandit, or all three in one; constituting, in connection with countless other crimes, a blacker character than the inhabitant of a civilized land can picture. Sometimes stript of their clothing, sometimes nearly starved, loaded with heavy irons, thrust into a hot, filthy, noisome apartment, with criminals for companions and criminals for guards, compelled to see the daily torture, to hear the shriek of anguish from writhing victims, with death, death in some terribly de-

testable form, always before them, a severer state of suffering can scarcely be imagined.

The Burmese had never been known to spare the lives of their war-captives ; and though the little band of foreigners could scarcely be called prisoners of war, yet this well-known custom, together with their having been thrust into the death-prison, from which there was no escape, except by a pardon from the king, cut off nearly every reasonable hope of rescue. But (quite a new thing in the annals of Burmese history), although some died from the intensity of their sufferings, no foreigner was wantonly put to death. Of those who were claimed by the English at the close of the war, some one or two are yet living, with anklets and bracelets which they will carry to the grave with them, wrought in their flesh by the heavy iron. It may well be imagined that these men might unfold to us scenes of horror, incidents daily occurring under their own shuddering gaze, in comparison with which the hair-elevating legends of Ann Radcliff would become simple fairy tales.

The death-prison at Ava was at that time a single large room, built of rough boards, without either window or door, and with but a thinly thatched roof to protect the wretched inmates from the blaze of a tropical sun. It was entered by slipping aside a single board, which constituted a sort of sliding-door. Around the prison, inside the yard, were ranged the huts of the under-jailers, or Children of the Prison, and outside of the yard, close at hand, that of the head-jailer. These jailers must necessarily be condemned criminals, with a ring, the sign of outlawry, traced in the skin of the cheek, and the name

of their crime engraved in the same manner upon the breast. The head-jailer was a tall, bony man, with sinews of iron ; wearing, when speaking, a malicious smirk, and given at times to a most revolting kind of jocoseness. When silent and quiet, he had a jaded, careworn look ; but it was at the torture that he was in his proper element. Then his face lighted up, — became glad, furious, demoniac. His small black eyes glittered like those of a serpent ; his thin lips rolled back, displaying his toothless gums in front, with a long, protruding tusk on either side, stained black as ebony ; his hollow, ringed cheeks seemed to contract more and more, and his breast heaved with convulsive delight beneath the fearful word **MAN-KILLER**. The prisoners called him *father*, when he was present to enforce this expression of affectionate familiarity ; but among themselves he was irreverently christened the Tiger-cat.

One of the most active of the Children of the Prison was a short, broad-faced man, labelled **THIEF**, who, as well as the Tiger, had a peculiar talent in the way of torturing ; and so fond was he of the use of the whip, that he often missed his count, and zealously exceeded the number of lashes ordered by the city governor. The wife of this man was a most odious creature, filthy, bold, impudent, cruel, and, like her husband, delighting in torture. Her face was not only deeply pitted with small-pox, but so deformed with leprosy, that the white cartilage of the nose was laid entirely bare ; from her large mouth shone rows of irregular teeth, black as ink ; her hair, which was left entirely to the care of nature, was matted in large black masses about her head ; and her

manner, under all this hideous ugliness, was insolent and vicious. They had two children, — little vipers, well loaded with venom ; and by their vexatious mode of annoyance, trying the tempers of the prisoners more than was in the power of the mature torturers.

As will readily be perceived, the security of this prison was not in the strength of the structure, but in the heavy manacles, and the living wall. The lives of the jailers depended entirely on their fidelity ; and fidelity involved strict obedience to orders, however ferocious. As for themselves, they could not escape ; they had nowhere to go ; certain death awaited them everywhere, for they bore on cheek and breast the ineffaceable proof of their outlawry. Their only safety was at their post ; and there was no safety there in humanity, even if it were possible for such degraded creatures to have a spark of humanity left. So inclination united with interest to make them what they really were, — demons.

The arrival of a new prisoner was an incident calculated to excite but little interest in the hat-wearers, provided he came in turban and waistcloth. But one morning there was brought in a young man, speaking the Burmese brokenly, and with the soft accent of the North, who at once attracted universal attention. He was tall and erect, with a mild, handsome face, bearing the impress of inexpressible suffering ; a complexion slightly tinted with the rich brown of the East ; a fine, manly carriage, and a manner which, even there, was both graceful and dignified.

“ Who is he ? ” was the interpretation of the inquiring glances exchanged among those who had no liberty to

speak ; and then eye asked of eye, “ What can he have done ? — he, so gentle, so mild, so manly, that even these wretches, who scarcely know the name of pity and respect, seem to feel both for him ? ” There was, in truth, something in the countenance of the new prisoner which, without asking for sympathy, involuntarily enforced it. It was not amiability, though his dark, soft, beautiful eye was full of a noble sweetness ; it was not resignation ; it was not apathy ; it was hopelessness, deep, utter, immovable, suffering hopelessness. Very young, and apparently not ambitious or revengeful, what crime could this interesting stranger have committed to draw down “ the golden foot ” with such crushing weight upon his devoted head ? He seemed utterly friendless, and without even the means of obtaining food ; for, as the day advanced, no one came to see him ; and the officer who brought him had left no directions. He did not, however, suffer from this neglect, for Madam Thief (most wonderful to relate !) actually shared so deeply in the universal sympathy, as to bring him a small quantity of boiled rice and water.

Toward evening, the Woon-bai, a governor, or rather Mayor of the city, entered the prison, his bold, lion-like face as open and unconcerned as ever, but with something of unusual bustling in his manner.

“ Where is he ? ” he cried sternly, — “ where is he ? this son of Kathay ? this dog, villain, traitor ! where is he ? Aha ! only one pair of irons ? Put on five ! do you hear ? five ! ”

The Woon-bai remained till his orders were executed, and the poor Kathayan was loaded with five pairs of fet-

ters ; and then he went out, frowning on one and smiling on another ; while the Children of the Prison watched his countenance and manner, as significant of what was expected of them. The prisoners looked at each other, and shook their heads in commiseration.

The next day the feet of the young Kathayan, in obedience to some new order, were placed in the stocks, which raised them about eighteen inches from the ground ; and the five pairs of fetters were all disposed on the outer side of the plank, so that their entire weight fell upon the ankles. The position was so painful that each prisoner, some from memory, some from sympathetic apprehension, shared in the pain when he looked at the sufferer.

During this day, one of the missionaries, who had been honored with an invitation, which it was never prudent to refuse, to the hut of the Thief, learned something of the history of the young man, and his crime. His home, it was told him, was among the rich hills of Kathay, as they range far northward, where the tropic sun loses the intense fierceness of his blaze, and makes the atmosphere soft and luxurious, as though it were mellowing beneath the same amber sky which ripens the fruits, and gives their glow to the flowers. What had been his rank in his own land, the jailer's wife did not know. Perhaps he had been a prince, chief of the brave band conquered by the superior force of the Burmans ; or a hunter among the spicy groves and deep-wooded jungles, lithe as the tiger which he pursued from lair to lair, and free as the flame-winged bird of the sun that circled above him ; or perhaps his destiny had been a humbler one, and he had but followed his goats as they bounded fearlessly from

ledge to ledge, and plucked for food the herbs upon his native hills. He had been brought away by a marauding party, and presented as a slave to the brother of the queen. This Men-thah-gyee, the Great Prince, as he was called, by way of pre-eminence, had risen, through the influence of his sister, from the humble condition of a fishmonger, to be the Richelieu of the nation. Unpopular from his mean origin, and still more unpopular from the acts of brutality to which the intoxication of power had given rise, the sympathy excited by the poor Kathayan in the breasts of these wretches may easily be accounted for. It was not pity or mercy, but hatred. Anywhere else, the sufferer's sad, handsome face, and mild, uncomplaining manner, would have enlisted sympathy; but here, they would scarcely have seen the sadness, or beauty, or mildness, except through the medium of a passion congenial to their own natures.

Among the other slaves of Men-thah-gyee was a young Kathay girl of singular beauty. She was, so said Madam the Thief, a bundle of roses, set round with the fragrant blossoms of the champac-tree; her breath was like that of the breezes when they come up from their dalliance with the spicy daughters of the islands of the south; her voice had caught its rich cadence from the musical gush of the silver fountain, which wakes among the green of her native hills; her hair had been braided from the glossy raven plumage of the royal edolius; her eyes were twin stars looking out from cool springs, all fringed with the long, tremulous reeds of the jungle; and her step was as the free, graceful bound of the wild antelope. On the subject of her grace, her beauty, and her wondrous

daring, the jailer's wife could not be sufficiently eloquent. And so this poor, proud, simple-souled maiden, this diamond from the rich hills of Kathay, destined to glitter for an hour or two on a prince's bosom, unsubdued even in her desolation, had dared to bestow her affections with the uncalculating lavishness of conscious heart-freedom. And the poor wretch, lying upon his back in the death-prison, his feet fast in the stocks and swelling and purpling beneath the heavy irons, had participated in her crime; had lured her on, by tender glances and by loving words, inexpressibly sweet in their mutual bondage, to irretrievable destruction. What fears, what hopes winged by fears, what tremulous joys, still hedged in by that same crowd of fears, what despondency, what revulsions of impotent anger and daring, what weeping, what despair, must have been theirs! Their tremblings and rejoicings, their mad projects, growing each day wilder and more dangerous,—since madness alone could have given rise to anything like hope,—are things left to imagination; for there was none to relate the heart-history of the two slaves of Men-thah-gyee. Yet there were some hints of a first accidental meeting under the shadow of the mango and tamarind trees, where the sun lighted up, by irregular gushes, the waters of the little lake in the centre of the garden, and the rustle of leaves seemed sufficient to drown the accents of their native tongues. So they looked, spoke, their hearts bounded, paused, trembled with soft home-memories: they whispered on, and they were lost. Poor slaves!

Then at evening, when the dark-browed maidens of the golden city gathered, with their earthen vessels, about

the well,—there, shaded by the thick clumps of bamboo, with the free sky overhead, the green earth beneath, and the songs and laughter of the merry girls ringing in their ears, so like their own home, the home which they had lost forever,—O, what a rare, sweet, dangerous meeting-place for those who should not, and yet must be lovers!

Finally came a day fraught with illimitable consequences,—the day when the young slave, not yet admitted to the royal harem, should become more than ever the property of her master. And now deeper grew their agony, more uncontrollable their madness, wilder and more daring their hopes, with every passing moment. Not a man in Ava, but would have told them that escape was impossible; and yet, goaded on by love and despair, they attempted the impossibility. They had countrymen in the city, and, under cover of night, they fled to them. Immediately the minister sent out his myrmidons; they were tracked, captured, and brought back to the palace.

“And what became of the poor girl?” inquired the missionary with much interest.

The woman shuddered, and beneath her scars and the swarthiness of her skin she became deadly pale.

“There is a cellar, Tsayah,” at last she whispered, still shuddering, “a deep cellar, that no one has seen, but horrible cries come from it sometimes, and two nights ago, for three hours, three long hours—such shrieks! Amai-ai! what shrieks! And they say that he was there, Tsayah, and saw and heard it all. That is the reason that his eyes are blinded and his ears benumbed. A great many go into that cellar, but none ever come out again,—none but the doomed like him. It is—*it is*

like the West Prison," she added, sinking her voice still lower, and casting an eager, alarmed look about her. The missionary too shuddered, as much at the mention of this prison, as at the recital of the woman; for it shut within its walls deep mysteries, which even his jailers, accustomed as they were to torture and death, shrank from babbling of.

The next day a cord was passed around the wrists of the young Kathayan, his arms jerked up into a position perpendicular with his prostrate body, and the end of the cord fastened to a beam overhead. Still, though faint from the lack of food, parched with thirst, and racked with pain, for his feet were swollen and livid, not a murmur of complaint escaped his lips. And yet this patient endurance seemed scarcely the result of fortitude or heroism; an observer would have said that the inner suffering was so great as to render that of the mere physical frame unheeded. There was the same expression of hopelessness, the same unvarying wretchedness, too deep, too real, to think of giving itself utterance on the face as at his first entrance into the prison; and except that he now and then fixed on one of the hopeless beings who regarded him in silent pity a mournful, half-beseeching, half-vacant stare, this was all.

That day passed away as others had passed; then came another night of dreams, in which loved ones gathered around the hearth-stone of a dear, distant home; dreams broken by the clanking of chains and the groans of the suffering; and then morning broke. There still hung the poor Kathayan; his face slightly distorted with the agony he was suffering, his lips dry and parched, his

cheek pallid and sunken, and his eyes wild and glaring. His breast swelled and heaved, and now and then a sob-like sigh burst forth involuntarily. When the Tiger entered, the eye of the young man immediately fastened on him, and a shiver passed through his frame. The old murderer went his usual rounds with great nonchalance ; gave an order here, a blow there, and cracked a malicious joke with a third ; smiling all the time that dark, sinister smile, which made him so much more hideous in the midst of his wickedness. At last he approached the Kathayan, who, with a convulsive movement, half raised himself from the ground at his touch, and seemed to contract like a shrivelled leaf.

“ Right ! right, my son ! ” said the old man, chuckling. “ You are expert at helping yourself, to be sure ; but then you need assistance. So, — so, — so ! ” and giving the cord three successive jerks, he succeeded, by means of his immense strength, in raising the Kathayan so that but the back of his head, as it fell downward, could touch the floor. There was a quick, short crackling of joints, and a groan escaped the prisoner. Another groan followed, and then another, — and another, — a heaving of the chest, a convulsive shiver, and for a moment he seemed lost. Human hearts glanced heavenward. “ God grant it ! Father of mercies, spare him further agony ! ” It could not be. Gaspingly came the lost breath back again, quiveringly the soft eyes unclosed ; and the young Kathayan captive was fully awake to his misery.

“ I cannot die so, — I cannot, — so slow, — so slow, — so slow ! ” Hunger gnawed, thirst burned, fever rev-

elled in his veins ; the cord upon his wrists cut to the bone ; corruption had already commenced upon his swollen, livid feet ; the most frightful, torturing pains distorted his body, and wrung from him groans and murmurings so pitiful, so harrowing, so full of anguish, that the unwilling listeners could only turn away their heads, or lift their eyes to each other's faces in mute horror. Not a word was exchanged among them, — not a lip had power to give it utterance.

“ I cannot die so ! I cannot die so ! I cannot die so ! ” came the words, at first moaningly, and then prolonged to a terrible howl. And so passed another day, and another night, and still the wretch lived on.

In the midst of their filth and smothering heat, the prisoners awoke from such troubled sleep as they could gain amid these horrors ; and those who could, pressed their feverish lips and foreheads to the crevices between the boards, to court the morning breezes. A lady, with a white brow, and a lip whose delicate vermillion had not ripened beneath the skies of India, came with food to her husband. By constant importunity had the beautiful ministering angel gained this holy privilege. Her coming was like a gleam of sunlight, — a sudden unfolding of the beauties of this bright earth to one born blind. She performed her usual tender ministry and departed.

Day advanced to its meridian ; and once more, but now hesitatingly, and as though he dreaded his task, the Tiger drew near the young Kathayan. But the sufferer did not shrink from him as before.

“ Quick ! ” he exclaimed greedily, — “ quick ! give me one hand and the cord, — just a moment, a single mo-

ment, — this hand with the cord in it, — and you shall be rid of me forever ! ”

The Tiger burst into a hideous laugh, his habitual cruelty returning at the sound of his victim’s voice.

“ Rid of you ! not so fast, my son ; not so fast ! You will hold out a day or two yet. Let me see ! ” passing his hand along the emaciated, feverish body of the sufferer. “ O, yes ; two days at least, perhaps three, and it may be longer. Patience, my son ; you are frightfully strong ! Now these joints, — why any other man’s would have separated long ago ; but here they stay just as firmly — ” As he spoke with a calculating sort of deliberation, the monster gave the cord a sudden jerk, then another, and a third, raising his victim still farther from the floor, and then adjusting it about the beam, walked unconcernedly away. For several minutes the prison rung with the most fearful cries. Shriek followed shriek, agonized, furious, with scarcely a breath between ; bellowsings, howlings, gnashings of the teeth, sharp, piercing screams, yells of savage defiance ; cry upon cry, cry upon cry, with wild superhuman strength, they came ; while the prisoners shrank in awe and terror, trembling in their chains. But this violence soon exhausted itself, and the paroxysm passed, giving place to low, sad moans, irresistibly pitiful. This was a day never to be forgotten by the hundred wretched creatures congregated in the gloomy death-prison. The sun had never seemed to move so slowly before. Its setting was gladly welcomed, but yet the night brought no change. Those piteous moans, those agonized groanings, seemed no nearer an end than ever.

Another day passed, — another night, — again day dawned and drew near its close ; and yet the poor Kathayan clung to life with frightful tenacity. One of the missionaries, as a peculiar favor, had been allowed to creep into an old shed, opposite the door of the prison ; and here he was joined by a companion, just as the day was declining towards evening.

“O, will it ever end ? ” whispered one.

The other only bowed his head between his hands, — “Terrible ! terrible ! ”

“There surely can be nothing worse in the West Prison.”

“Can there be anything worse, — can there be more finished demons in the pit ? ”

Suddenly, while this broken conversation was conducted in a low tone, so as not to draw upon the speakers the indignation of their jailers, they were struck by the singular stillness of the prison. The clanking of chains, the murmur and the groan, the heavy breathing of congregated living beings, the bustle occasioned by the continual uneasy movement of the restless sufferers, the ceaseless tread of the Children of the Prison, and their bullying voices, all were hushed.

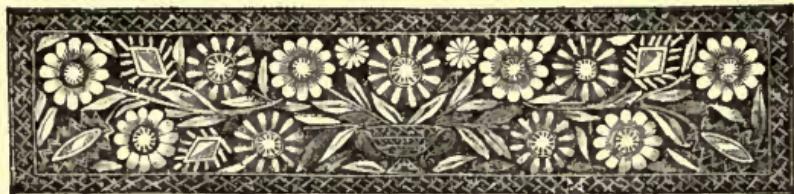
“What is it ? ” in a lower whisper than ever ; and a shaking of the head, and holding their own chains to prevent their rattle, and looks full of wonder, was all that passed between the two listeners. Their amazement was interrupted by a dull, heavy sound, as though a bag of dried bones had been suddenly crushed down by the weight of some powerful foot. Silently they stole to a crevice in the boards, opposite the open door. Not a

jailer was to be seen ; and the prisoners were motionless and apparently breathless, with the exception of one powerful man, who was just drawing the wooden mallet in his hand for another blow on the temple of the suspended Kathayan. It came down with the same dull, hollow, crushing sound ; the body swayed from the point where it was suspended by wrist and ankle, till it seemed that every joint must be dislocated ; but the flesh scarcely quivered. The blow was repeated, and then another, and another ; but they were not needed. The poor captive Kathayan was dead.

The mallet was placed away from sight, and the daring man hobbled back to his corner, dangling his heavy chain as though it had been a plaything, and striving with all his might to look unconscious and unconcerned. An evident feeling of relief stole over the prisoners ; the Children of the Prison came back to their places, one by one, and all went on as before. It was some time before any one appeared to discover the death of the Kathayan. The old Tiger declared it was what he had been expecting, that his living on in this manner was quite out of rule ; but that those hardy fellows from the hills never would give in, while there was a possibility of drawing another breath. Then the poor skeleton was unchained, dragged by the heels into the prison-yard, and thrown into a gutter. It did not apparently fall properly, for one of the jailers altered the position of the shoulders by means of his foot ; then clutching the long black hair, jerked the head a little farther on the side. Thus the discolored temple was hidden ; and surely that emaciated form gave sufficient evidence of a lingering death. Soon

after, a party of government officers visited the prison-yard, touched the corpse with their feet, without raising it, and, apparently satisfied, turned away, as though it had been a dead dog, that they cared not to give further attention.

Is it strange that, if one were there, with a human heart within him, not brutalized by crime or steeled by passive familiarity with suffering, he should have dragged his heavy chain to the side of the dead, and dropped upon his sharpened, distorted features the tear, which there was none who had loved him to shed? Is it strange that tender fingers should have closed the staring eyes, and touched gently the cold brow, which throbbed no longer with pain, and smoothed the frayed hair, and composed the passive limbs decently, though he knew that the next moment rude hands would destroy the result of his pious labor? And is it strange that when all which remained of the poor sufferer had been jostled into its sackcloth shroud, and crammed down into the dark hole dug for it in the earth, a prayer should have ascended, even from that terrible prison? Not a prayer for the dead; he had received his doom. But an earnest, beseeching upheaving of the heart, for those wretched beings that, in the face of the pure heavens and the smiling earth, confound, by the inherent blackness of their natures, philosopher, priest, or philanthropist, who dares to tickle the ears of the multitude with fair theories of "Natural religion," and "The dignity of human nature."



THE STORY OF LA ROCHE.

BY HENRY MACKENZIE.

LORE than forty years ago an English philosopher, whose works have since been read and admired by all Europe, resided at a little town in France. Some disappointments in his native country had first driven him abroad, and he was afterward induced to remain there from having found, in this retreat, where the connections even of nation and language were avoided, a perfect seclusion and retirement highly favorable to the development of abstract subjects, in which he excelled all the writers of his time.

Perhaps, in the structure of such a mind as Mr. —'s, the finer and more delicate sensibilities are seldom known to have place, or, if originally implanted there, are in a great measure extinguished by the exertions of intense study and profound investigation. Hence the idea of philosophy and unfeelingness being united has become proverbial, and, in common language, the former word is often used to express the latter. Our philosopher had been censured by some as deficient in warmth and feeling; but the mildness of his manners has been allowed

by all, and it is certain that, if he was not easily melted into compassion, it was at least not difficult to awaken his benevolence.

One morning, while he sat busied in those speculations which afterward astonished the world, an old female domestic, who served him for a housekeeper, brought him word that an elderly gentleman and his daughter had arrived in the village the preceding evening, on their way to some distant country, and that the father had been suddenly seized in the night with a dangerous disorder, which the people of the inn where they lodged feared would prove mortal; that she had been sent for, as having some knowledge of medicine, the village surgeon being then absent; and that it was truly piteous to see the good old man, who seemed not so much afflicted by his own distress as by that which it caused to his daughter. Her master laid aside the volume in his hand, and broke off the chain of ideas it had inspired. His nightgown was exchanged for a coat, and he followed his *gouvernante* to the sick man's apartment.

It was the best in the inn where they lay, but a paltry one notwithstanding. Mr. —— was obliged to stoop as he entered it. It was floored with earth, and above were the joists not plastered, and hung with cobwebs. On a flock-bed, at one end, lay the old man he came to visit; at the foot of it sat his daughter. She was dressed in a clean white bedgown; her dark locks hung loosely over it as she bent forward, watching the languid looks of her father. Mr. —— and his housekeeper had stood some moments in the room without the young lady's being sensible of their entering it.

"Mademoiselle!" said the old woman at last, in a soft tone.

She turned and showed one of the finest faces in the world. It was touched, not spoiled, with sorrow; and when she perceived a stranger, whom the old woman now introduced to her, a blush at first, and then the gentle ceremonial of native politeness, which the affliction of the time tempered but did not extinguish, crossed it for a moment and changed its expression. It was sweetness all, however, and our philosopher felt it strongly. It was not a time for words; he offered his services in a few sincere ones.

"Monsieur lies miserably ill here," said the *gouvernante*; "if he could possibly be moved anywhere."

"If he could be moved to our house," said her master. He had a spare bed for a friend, and there was a garret room unoccupied, next to the *gouvernante's*.

It was contrived accordingly. The scruples of the stranger, who could look scruples though he could not speak them, were overcome, and the bashful reluctance of his daughter gave way to her belief of its use to her father. The sick man was wrapped in blankets, and carried across the street to the English gentleman's. The old woman helped his daughter to nurse him there. The surgeon, who arrived soon after, prescribed a little, and nature did much for him; in a week he was able to thank his benefactor.

By that time his host had learned the name and character of his guest. He was a Protestant clergyman of Switzerland, called La Roche, a widower, who had lately buried his wife, after a long and lingering illness, for

which travelling had been prescribed, and was now returning home, after an ineffectual and melancholy journey, with his only child, the daughter we have mentioned.

He was a devout man, as became his profession. He possessed devotion in all its warmth, but with none of its asperity,—I mean that asperity which men, called devout, sometimes indulge in.

Mr. ——, though he felt no devotion, never quarrelled with it in others. His *gouvernante* joined the old man and his daughter in the prayers and thanksgivings which they put up on his recovery; for she too was a heretic, in the phrase of the village. The philosopher walked out, with his long staff and his dog, and left them to their prayers and thanksgivings.

“My master,” said the old woman, “alas! he is not a Christian; but he is the best of unbelievers.”

“Not a Christian!” exclaimed Mademoiselle La Roche, “yet he saved my father! Heaven bless him for it! I would he were a Christian.”

“There is a pride in human knowledge, my child,” said her father, “which often blinds men to the sublime truths of revelation; hence opposers of Christianity are found among men of virtuous lives, as well as among those of dissipated and licentious characters. Nay, sometimes I have known the latter more easily converted to the true faith than the former, because the fume of passion is more easily dissipated than the mist of false theory and delusive speculation.”

“But Mr. ——,” said his daughter, “alas! my father, he shall be a Christian before he dies.” She was inter-

rupted by the arrival of their landlord. He took her hand with an air of kindness. She drew it away from him in silence, threw down her eyes to the ground, and left the room.

"I have been thanking God," said the good La Roche, "for my recovery."

"That is right," replied his landlord.

"I would not wish," continued the old man hesitatingly, "to think otherwise. Did I not look up with gratitude to that Being, I should barely be satisfied with my recovery as a continuation of life, which, it may be, is not a real good. Alas! I may live to wish I had died, that you had left me to die, sir, instead of kindly relieving me,"—he clasped Mr. ——'s hand,— "but, when I look on this renovated being as the gift of the Almighty, I feel a far different sentiment; my heart dilates with gratitude and love to him; it is prepared for doing his will, not as a duty, but as a pleasure, and regards every breach of it, not with disapprobation, but with horror."

"You say right, my dear sir," replied the philosopher, "but you are not yet re-established enough to talk much; you must take care of your health, and neither study nor preach for some time. I have been thinking over a scheme that struck me to-day when you mentioned your intended departure. I never was in Switzerland. I have a great mind to accompany your daughter and you into that country. I will help to take care of you by the road; for as I was your first physician, I hold myself responsible for your cure."

La Roche's eyes glistened at the proposal. His daughter was called in and told of it. She was equally pleased

with her father, for they really loved their landlord,—not perhaps the less for his infidelity; at least, that circumstance mixed a sort of pity with their regard for him,—their souls were not of a mould for harsher feelings; hatred never dwelt in them.

They travelled by short stages; for the philosopher was as good as his word in taking care that the old man should not be fatigued. The party had time to be well acquainted with each other, and their friendship was increased by acquaintance. La Roche found a degree of simplicity and gentleness in his companion which is not always annexed to the character of a learned or a wise man. His daughter, who was prepared to be afraid of him, was equally undeceived. She found in him nothing of that self-importance which superior parts, or great cultivation of them, is apt to confer. He talked of everything but philosophy and religion; he seemed to enjoy every pleasure and amusement of ordinary life, and to be interested in the most common topics of discourse; when his knowledge of learning at any time appeared, it was delivered with the utmost plainness and without the least shadow of dogmatism.

On his part, he was charmed with the society of the good clergyman and his lovely daughter. He found in them the guileless manner of the earliest times, with the culture and accomplishment of the most refined ones; every better feeling warm and vivid, every ungentle one repressed or overcome. He was not addicted to love; but he felt himself happy in being the friend of Mademoiselle La Roche, and sometimes envied her father the possession of such a child.

After a journey of eleven days, they arrived at the dwelling of La Roche. It was situated in one of those valleys of the canton of Berne, where Nature seems to repose, as it were, in quiet, and has enclosed her retreat with mountains inaccessible. A stream, that spent its fury in the hills above, ran in front of the house, and a broken waterfall was seen through the wood that covered its sides; below it circled round a tufted plain, and formed a little lake in front of a village, at the end of which appeared the spire of La Roche's church, rising above a clump of beeches.

Mr. —— enjoyed the beauty of the scene; but to his companions it recalled the memory of a wife and parent they had lost. The old man's sorrow was silent; his daughter sobbed and wept. Her father took her hand, kissed it twice, pressed it to his bosom, threw up his eyes to heaven, and, having wiped off a tear that was just about to drop from each, began to point out to his guest some of the most striking objects which the prospect afforded. The philosopher interpreted all this, and he could but slightly censure the creed from which it arose.

They had not been long arrived when a number of La Roche's parishioners, who had heard of his return, came to the house to see and welcome him. The honest folks were awkward, but sincere, in their professions of regard. They made some attempts at condolence; it was too delicate for their handling, but La Roche took it in good part. "It has pleased God," said he; and they saw he had settled the matter with himself. Philosophy could not have done so much with a thousand words.

It was now evening, and the good peasants were

about to depart, when a clock was heard to strike seven, and the hour was followed by a particular chime. The country folks, who had come to welcome their pastor, turned their looks toward him at the sound. He explained their meaning to his guest.

"That is the signal," said he, "for our evening exercise. This is one of the nights of the week in which some of my parishioners are wont to join in it; a little rustic saloon serves for the chapel of our family and such of the good people as are with us. If you choose rather to walk out, I will furnish you with an attendant; or here are a few old books that may afford you some entertainment within."

"By no means," answered the philosopher; "I will attend Mademoiselle at her devotions."

"She is our organist," said La Roche. "Our neighborhood is the country of musical mechanism, and I have a small organ fitted up for the purpose of assisting our singing."

"'T is an additional inducement," replied the other; and they walked into the room together.

At the end stood the organ mentioned by La Roche; before it was a curtain, which his daughter drew aside, and, placing herself on a seat within and drawing the curtain close so as to save her the awkwardness of an exhibition, began a voluntary, solemn and beautiful in the highest degree. Mr. —— was no musician, but he was not altogether insensible to music; and this fastened on his mind more strongly from its beauty being unexpected. The solemn prelude introduced a hymn, in which such of the audience as could sing immediately

joined. The words were mostly taken from holy writ; it spoke the praises of God, and his care of good men. Something was said of the death of the just, of such as die in the Lord. The organ was touched with a hand less firm; it paused; it ceased; and the sobbing of Mademoiselle La Roche was heard in its stead. Her father gave a sign for stopping the psalmody, and rose to pray. He was discomposed at first, and his voice faltered as he spoke; but his heart was in his words, and its warmth overcame his embarrassment. He addressed a Being whom he loved, and he spoke for those he loved. His parishioners caught the ardor of the good old man; even the philosopher felt himself moved, and forgot, for a moment, to think why he should not.

La Roche's religion was that of sentiment, not theory, and his guest was averse from disputation; their discourse, therefore, did not lead to questions concerning the belief of either; yet would the old man sometimes speak of his, from the fulness of a heart impressed with its force and wishing to spread the pleasure he enjoyed in it. The ideas of a God and a Saviour were so congenial to his mind, that every emotion of it naturally awakened them. A philosopher might have called him an enthusiast; but, if he possessed the fervor of enthusiasts, he was guiltless of their bigotry. "Our Father, which art in heaven!" might the good man say, for he felt it, and all mankind were his brethren.

" You regret, my friend," said he to Mr. ——, " when my daughter and I talk of the exquisite pleasure derived from music,— you regret your want of musical powers and musical feelings; it is a department of soul, you

say, which nature has almost denied you, which, from the effects you see it have on others, you are sure must be highly delightful. Why should not the same thing be said of religion? Trust me, I feel it in the same way, — an energy, an inspiration, which I would not lose for all the blessings of sense, or enjoyments of the world; yet, so far from lessening my relish of the pleasures of life, methinks I feel it heighten them all. The thought of receiving it from God adds the blessing of sentiment to that of sensation in every good thing I possess; and when calamities overtake me, — and I have had my share, — it confers a dignity on my affliction, so lifts me above the world. Man, I know, is but a worm; yet, methinks, I am then allied to God!"

It would have been inhuman in our philosopher to have clouded, even with a doubt, the sunshine of this belief. His discourse, indeed, was very remote from metaphysical disquisition or religious controversy. Of all men I ever knew, his ordinary conversation was the least tinctured with pedantry, or liable to dissertation. With La Roche and his daughter, it was perfectly familiar. The country round them, the manners of the villagers, the comparison of both with those of England, remarks on the works of favorite authors, on the sentiments they conveyed and the passions they excited, with many other topics in which there was an equality or alternate advantage among the speakers, were the subjects they talked on. Their hours, too, of riding and walking were many, in which Mr. —, as a stranger, was shown the remarkable scenes and curiosities of the country. They would sometimes make little expeditions

to contemplate, in different attitudes, those astonishing mountains, the cliffs of which, covered with eternal snows, and sometimes shooting into fantastic shapes, form the termination of most of the Swiss prospects. Our philosopher asked many questions as to their natural history and productions. La Roche observed the sublimity of the ideas which the view of their stupendous summits, inaccessible to mortal foot, was calculated to inspire, which naturally, said he, leads the mind to that Being by whom their foundations were laid.

"They are not seen in Flanders," said Mademoiselle with a sigh.

"That's an odd remark," said Mr. ——, smiling.

She blushed, and he inquired no further.

It was with regret he left a society in which he found himself so happy; but he settled with La Roche and his daughter a plan of correspondence, and they took his promise that, if ever he came within fifty leagues of their dwelling, he should travel those fifty leagues to visit them.

About three years after, our philosopher was on a visit at Geneva; the promise he made to La Roche and his daughter, on his former visit, was recalled to his mind by the view of that range of mountains on a part of which they had often looked together. There was a reproach, too, conveyed along with the recollection, for his having failed to write to either for several months past. The truth was, that indolence was the habit most natural to him, from which he was not easily roused by the claims of correspondence, either of his friends or of his enemies; when the latter drew their pens in controversy, they were

often unanswered as well as the former. While he was hesitating about a visit to La Roche, which he wished to make, but found the effort rather too much for him, he received a letter from the old man, which had been forwarded to him from Paris, where he had then fixed his residence. It contained a gentle complaint of Mr. ——'s want of punctuality, but an assurance of continued gratitude for his former good offices ; and, as a friend whom the writer considered interested in his family, it informed him of the approaching nuptials of Mademoiselle La Roche with a young man, a relation of her own, and formerly a pupil of her father's, of the most amiable dispositions and respectable character. Attached from their earliest years, they had been separated by his joining one of the subsidiary regiments of the canton, then in the service of a foreign power. In this situation he had distinguished himself as much for courage and military skill as for the other endowments which he had cultivated at home. The time of his service was now expired, and they expected him to return in a few weeks, when the old man hoped, as he expressed it in his letter, to join their hands and see them happy before he died.

Our philosopher felt himself interested in this event ; but he was not, perhaps, altogether so happy in the tidings of Mademoiselle La Roche's marriage as her father supposed him. Not that he was ever a lover of the lady's ; but he thought her one of the most amiable women he had seen, and there was something in the idea of her being another's forever that struck him, he knew not why, like a disappointment. After some little speculation on the matter, however, he could look on it as a

thing fitting if not quite agreeable, and determined on this visit to see his old friend and his daughter happy.

On the last day of his journey, different accidents had retarded his progress : he was benighted before he reached the quarter in which La Roche resided. His guide, however, was well acquainted with the road, and he found himself at last in view of the lake, which I have before described, in the neighborhood of La Roche's dwelling. A light gleamed on the water, that seemed to proceed from the house ; it moved slowly along as he proceeded up the side of the lake, and at last he saw it glimmer through the trees, and stop at some distance from the place where he then was. He supposed it some piece of bridal merriment, and pushed on his horse that he might be a spectator of the scene ; but he was a good deal shocked, on approaching the spot, to find it proceed from the torch of a person clothed in the dress of an attendant on a funeral, and accompanied by several others who, like him, seemed to have been employed in the rites of sepulture.

On Mr. —'s making inquiry who was the person they had been burying, one of them, with an accent more mournful than is common to their profession, answered, —

“ Then you knew not Mademoiselle, sir ? You never beheld a lovelier — ”

“ La Roche ! ” exclaimed he in reply.

“ Alas ! it was she indeed.”

The appearance of surprise and grief which his countenance assumed attracted the notice of the peasant with whom he talked. He came up closer to Mr. —. “ I

perceive, sir, you were acquainted with Mademoiselle La Roche."

"Acquainted with her! — Good God! — when — how — where did she die? Where is her father?"

"She died, sir, of heart-break, I believe. The young gentleman to whom she was soon to have been married was killed in a duel by a French officer, his intimate companion, to whom, before their quarrel, he had often done the greatest favors. Her worthy father bears her death as he has often told us a Christian should; he is even so composed as to be now in his pulpit, ready to deliver a few exhortations to his parishioners, as is the custom with us on such occasions. Follow me, sir, and you shall hear him."

He followed the man without answering.

The church was dimly lighted, except near the pulpit, where the venerable La Roche was seated. His people were now lifting up their voices in a psalm to that Being whom their pastor had taught them ever to bless and to revere. La Roche sat, his figure bending gently forward, his eyes half closed, lifted up in silent devotion. A lamp placed near him threw its light strong on his head, and marked the shadowy lines of age across the paleness of his brow, thinly covered with gray hairs.

The music ceased. La Roche sat for a moment, and nature wrung a few tears from him. His people were loud in their grief: Mr. —— was not less affected than they. La Roche arose.

"Father of mercies!" said he, "forgive these tears; assist thy servant to lift up his soul to thee, to lift to thee the souls of thy people. My friends, it is good so to do;

at all seasons it is good ; but in the days of our distress, what a privilege it is ! Well saith the sacred book, ‘ Trust in the Lord ; at all times trust in the Lord ! ’ When every other support fails us, when the fountains of worldly comfort are dried up, let us then seek those living waters which flow from the throne of God. ’T is only from the belief of the goodness and wisdom of a Supreme Being that our calamities can be borne in that manner which becomes a man. Human wisdom is here of little use ; for, in proportion as it bestows comfort, it represses feeling, without which we may cease to be hurt by calamity, but we shall also cease to enjoy happiness. I will not bid you be insensible, my friends. I cannot, if I would.” His tears flowed afresh. “ I feel too much myself, and I am not ashamed of my feelings ; but therefore may I the more willingly be heard ; therefore have I prayed God to give me strength to speak to you, to direct you to him, not with empty words, but with these tears, not from speculation, but from experience, that while you see me suffer you may know also my consolation. You behold the mourner of his only child, the last earthly stay and blessing of his declining years. Such a child too ! It becomes not me to speak of her virtues ; yet it is but gratitude to mention them, because they were exerted toward myself. Not many days ago you saw her young, beautiful, virtuous, and happy. Ye who are parents will judge of my felicity then ; ye will judge of my affliction now. But I look toward him who struck me ; I see the hand of a father amidst the chastenings of my God. Oh ! could I make you feel what it is to pour out the heart, when it is pressed down with many sor-

rows, to pour it out with confidence to him in whose hands are life and death, on whose power awaits all that the first enjoys, and in contemplation of whom disappears all that the last can inflict. For we are not as those who die without hope; we know that our Redeemer liveth,—that we shall live with him, with our friends, his servants, in that blessed land where sorrow is unknown, and happiness is endless as it is perfect. Go, then, mourn not for me; I have not lost my child; but a little while, and we shall meet again, never to be separated. But ye are also my children: would ye that I should not grieve without comfort? So live as she lived, that, when your death cometh, it may be the death of the righteous, and your latter end like his."

Such was the exhortation of La Roche: his audience answered it with their tears. The good old man had dried up his at the altar of the Lord: his countenance had lost its sadness and assumed the glow of faith and hope. Mr. —— followed him into his house. The inspiration of the pulpit was past; at sight of him, the scenes they had last met in rushed again on his mind; La Roche threw his arms around his neck, and watered it with his tears. The other was equally affected. They went together, in silence, into the parlor, where the evening service was wont to be performed. The curtains of the organ were open; La Roche started back at the sight.

"Oh! my friend!" said he, and his tears burst forth again.

Mr. —— had now recollected himself; he stepped forward, and drew the curtains close. The old man wiped

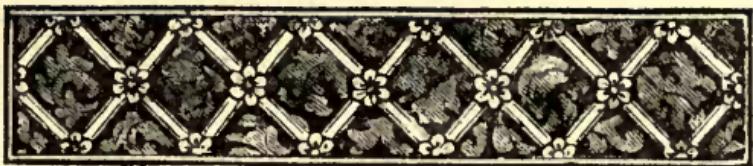
off his tears, and taking his friend's hand, " You see my weakness," said he, "'t is the weakness of humanity ; but my comfort is not therefore lost."

" I heard you," said the other, " in the pulpit ; I rejoice that such consolation is yours."

" It is, my friend," said he ; " and I trust I shall ever hold it fast. If there are any who doubt our faith, let them think of what importance religion is to calamity, and forbear to weaken its force. If they cannot restore our happiness, let them not take away the solace of our affliction."

Mr. ——'s heart was smitten, and I have heard him, long after, confess that there were moments when the remembrance overcame him even to weakness ; when, amidst all the pleasures of philosophical discovery and the pride of literary fame, he recalled to his mind the venerable figure of the good La Roche, and wished that he had never doubted.





THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH.

BY THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

WHAT is to be thought of sudden death? It is remarkable that, in different conditions of society, it has been variously regarded as the consummation of an earthly career most fervently to be desired, and on the other hand, as that consummation which is most of all to be deprecated. Cæsar the Dictator, at his last dinner-party (*cæna*), and the very evening before his assassination, being questioned as to the mode of death which, in *his* opinion, might seem the most eligible, replied, "That which should be most sudden." On the other hand, the divine Litany of our English Church, when breathing forth supplications, as if in some representative character for the whole human race prostrate before God, places such a death in the very van of horrors. "From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death, — *Good Lord, deliver us.*" Sudden death is here made to crown the climax in a grand ascent of calamities; it is the last of curses; and yet, by the noblest of Romans, it was treated as the first of blessings.

In that difference, most readers will see little more than the difference between Christianity and Paganism. But there I hesitate. The Christian Church may be right in its estimate of sudden death; and it is a natural feeling, though after all it may also be an infirm one, to wish for a quiet dismissal from life,—as that which *seems* most reconcilable with meditation, with penitential retrospects, and with the humilities of farewell prayer. There does not, however, occur to me any direct Scriptural warrant for this earnest petition of the English Litany. It seems rather a petition indulged to human infirmity, than exacted from human piety. And, however *that* may be, two remarks suggest themselves as prudent restraints upon a doctrine, which else *may* wander, and *has* wandered, into an uncharitable superstition. The first is this: that many people are likely to exaggerate the horror of a sudden death (I mean the objective horror to him who contemplates such a death, not the subjective horror to him who suffers it), from the false disposition to lay a stress upon words or acts, simply because by an accident they have become words or acts. If a man dies, for instance, by some sudden death when he happens to be intoxicated, such a death is falsely regarded with peculiar horror; as though the intoxication were suddenly exalted into a blasphemy. But *that* is unphilosophic. The man was, or he was not, *habitually* a drunkard. If not, if his intoxication were a solitary accident, there can be no reason at all for allowing special emphasis to this act, simply because through misfortune it became his final act. Nor, on the other hand, if it were no accident, but one of his *habitual* transgressions, will it be the more

habitual or the more a transgression, because some sudden calamity, surprising him, has caused this habitual transgression to be also a final one? Could the man have had any reason even dimly to foresee his own sudden death, there would have been a new feature in his act of intemperance,—a feature of presumption and irreverence, as in one that by possibility felt himself drawing near to the presence of God. But this is no part of the case supposed. And the only new element in the man's act is not any element of extra immorality, but simply of extra misfortune.

The other remark has reference to the meaning of the word *sudden*. And it is a strong illustration of the duty which forever calls us to the stern valuation of words, that very possibly Cæsar and the Christian Church do not differ in the way supposed; that is, do not differ by any difference of doctrine as between Pagan and Christian views of the moral temper appropriate to death, but that they are contemplating different cases. Both contemplate a violent death, a *Biaθarovos*—death that is *Biaos*: but the difference is that the Roman by the word “sudden” means an *unlingering* death: whereas the Christian Litany by “sudden” means a death *without warning*, consequently without any available summons to religious preparation. The poor mutineer, who kneels down to gather into his heart the bullets from twelve firelocks of his pitying comrades, dies by a most sudden death in Cæsar's sense: one shock, one mighty spasm, one (possibly *not* one) groan, and all is over. But, in the sense of the Litany, his death is far from sudden; his offence, originally, his imprisonment, his trial, the

interval between his sentence and its execution, having all furnished him with separate warnings of his fate,—having all summoned him to meet it with solemn preparation.

Meantime, whatever may be thought of a sudden death as a mere variety in the modes of dying, where death in some shape is inevitable,—a question which, equally in the Roman and the Christian sense, will be variously answered according to each man's variety of temperament,—certainly, upon one aspect of sudden death there can be no opening for doubt, that of all agonies incident to man it is the most frightful, that of all martyrdoms it is the most freezing to human sensibilities,—namely, where it surprises a man under circumstances which offer (or which seem to offer) some hurried and inappreciable chance of evading it. Any effort, by which such an evasion can be accomplished, must be as sudden as the danger which it affronts. Even *that*, even the sickening necessity for hurrying in extremity where all hurry seems destined to be vain, self-baffled, and where the dreadful knell of *too* late is already sounding in the ears by anticipation,—even that anguish is liable to a hideous exasperation in one particular case, namely, where the agonizing appeal is made not exclusively to the instinct of self-preservation, but to the conscience on behalf of another life besides your own, accidentally cast upon *your* protection. To fail, to collapse in a service merely your own, might seem comparatively venial; though, in fact, it is far from venial. But to fail in a case where Providence has suddenly thrown into your hands the final interests of another,—of a fellow-creature shud-

dering between the gates of life and death; this, to a man of apprehensive conscience, would mingle the misery of an atrocious criminality with the misery of a bloody calamity. The man is called upon, too probably, to die; but to die at the very moment when, by any momentary collapse, he is self-denounced as a murderer. He had but the twinkling of an eye for his effort, and that effort might, at the best, have been unavailing; but from this shadow of a chance, small or great, how if he has recoiled by a treasonable *lâcheté*? The effort *might* have been without hope; but to have risen to the level of that effort would have rescued him, though not from dying, yet from dying as a traitor to his duties.

The situation here contemplated exposes a dreadful ulcer lurking far down in the depths of human nature. It is not that men generally are summoned to face such awful trials. But potentially, and in shadowy outline, such a trial is moving subterraneously in perhaps all men's natures,—muttering under ground in one world, to be realized perhaps in some other. Upon the secret mirror of our dreams such a trial is darkly projected at intervals, perhaps, to every one of us. That dream, so familiar to childhood, of meeting a lion, and, from languishing prostration in hope and vital energy, that constant sequel of lying down before him, publishes the secret frailty of human nature,—reveals its deep-seated Pariah falsehood to itself,—records its abysmal treachery. Perhaps not one of us escapes that dream; perhaps, as by some sorrowful doom of man, that dream repeats for every one of us, through every generation, the original temptation in Eden. Every one of us, in

this dream, has a bait offered to the infirm places of his own individual will; once again a snare is made ready for leading him into captivity to a luxury of ruin; again, as in aboriginal Paradise, the man falls from innocence; once again, by infinite iteration, the ancient Earth groans to God, through her secret caves, over the weakness of her child; "Nature, from her seat, sighing through all her works," again "gives signs of woe that all is lost"; and again the countersign is repeated to the sorrowing heavens of the endless rebellion against God. Many people think that one man, the patriarch of our race, could not in his single person execute this rebellion for all his race. Perhaps they are wrong. But, even if not, perhaps in the world of dreams every one of us ratifies for himself the original act. Our English rite of Confirmation, by which, in years of awakened reason, we take upon us the engagements contracted for us in our slumbering infancy,—how sublime a rite is that! The little postern gate, through which the baby in its cradle had been silently placed for a time within the glory of God's countenance, suddenly rises to the clouds as a triumphal arch, through which, with banners displayed and martial pomps, we make our second entry as crusading soldiers militant for God, by personal choice and by sacramental oath. Each man says in effect, "Lo! I rebaptize myself; and that which once was sworn on my behalf, now I swear for myself." Even so in dreams, perhaps, under some secret conflict of the midnight sleeper, lighted up to the consciousness at the time, but darkened to the memory as soon as all is finished, each several child of our mysterious race completes for himself the aboriginal fall.

As I drew near to the Manchester post-office, I found that it was considerably past midnight ; but to my great relief, as it was important for me to be in Westmoreland by the morning, I saw by the huge saucer eyes of the mail, blazing through the gloom of overhanging houses, that my chance was not yet lost. Past the time it was ; but by some luck, very unusual in my experience, the mail was not even yet ready to start. I ascended to my seat on the box, where my cloak was still lying as it had lain at the Bridgewater Arms. I had left it there in imitation of a nautical discoverer, who leaves a bit of bunting on the shore of his discovery, by way of warning off the ground the whole human race, and signalizing to the Christian and the heathen worlds, with his best compliments, that he has planted his throne forever upon that virgin soil : henceforward claiming the *jus dominii* to the top of the atmosphere above it, and also the right of driving shafts to the centre of the earth below it ; so that all people found after this warning, either aloft in the atmosphere, or in the shafts, or squatting on the soil, will be treated as trespassers, — that is, decapitated by their very faithful and obedient servant, the owner of the said bunting. Possibly my cloak might not have been respected, and the *jus gentium* might have been cruelly violated in my person, — for in the dark, people commit deeds of darkness, gas being a great ally of morality, — but it so happened that, on this night, there was no other outside passenger ; and the crime, which else was but too probable, missed fire for want of a criminal. By the way, I may as well mention at this point, since a circumstantial accuracy is essential to the effect

of my narrative, that there was no other person of any description whatever about the mail — the guard, the coachman, and myself being allowed for — except only one, — a horrid creature of the class known to the world as insiders, but whom young Oxford called sometimes “Trojans,” in opposition to our Grecian selves, and sometimes “vermin.” A Turkish Effendi, who piques himself on good-breeding, will never mention by name a pig. Yet it is but too often that he has reason to mention this animal; since constantly, in the streets of Stamboul, he has his trousers deranged or polluted by this vile creature running between his legs. But under any excess of hurry he is always careful, out of respect to the company he is dining with, to suppress the odious name, and to call the wretch “that other creature,” as though all animal life beside formed one group, and this odious beast (to whom, as Chrysippus observed, salt serves as an apology for a soul) formed another and alien group on the outside of creation. Now I, who am an English Effendi, that think myself to understand good-breeding as well as any son of Othman, beg my reader’s pardon for having mentioned an insider by his gross natural name. I shall do so no more; and, if I should have occasion to glance at so painful a subject, I shall always call him “that other creature.” Let us hope, however, that no such distressing occasion will arise. But, by the way, an occasion arises at this moment; for the reader will be sure to ask, when we come to the story, “Was this other creature present?” He was *not*; or more correctly, perhaps, *it* was not. We dropped the creature — or the creature, by natural imbecility, dropped itself —

within the first ten miles from Manchester. In the latter case, I wish to make a philosophic remark of a moral tendency. When I die, or when the reader dies, and by repute suppose of fever, it will never be known whether we died in reality of the fever or of the doctor. But this other creature, in the case of dropping out of the coach, will enjoy a coroner's inquest ; consequently he will enjoy an epitaph. For I insist upon it, that the verdict of a coroner's jury makes the best of epitaphs. It is brief, so that the public all find time to read ; it is pithy, so that the surviving friends (if any *can* survive such a loss) remember it without fatigue ; it is upon oath, so that rascals and Dr. Johnsons cannot pick holes in it. "Died through the visitation of intense stupidity, by impinging on a moonlight night against the off-hind wheel of the Glasgow mail ! Deodand upon the said wheel — two-pence." What a simple lapidary inscription ! Nobody much in the wrong but an off-wheel ; and with few acquaintances ; and if it were but rendered into choice Latin, though there would be a little bother in finding a Ciceronian word for "off-wheel," Marcellus himself, that great master of sepulchral eloquence, could not show a better. Why I call this little remark *moral* is, from the compensation it points out. Here, by the supposition, is that other creature on the one side, the beast of the world ; and he (or it) gets an epitaph. You and I, on the contrary, the pride of our friends, get none.

But why linger on the subject of vermin ? Having mounted the box, I took a small quantity of laudanum, having already travelled two hundred and fifty miles, — namely, from a point seventy miles beyond London, upon

a simple breakfast. In the taking of laudanum there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident it drew upon me the special attention of my assessor on the box, the coachman. And in *that* there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident, and with great delight, it drew my attention to the fact that this coachman was a monster in point of size, and that he had but one eye. In fact, he had been foretold by Virgil as—

“Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens cui lumen ademptum.”

He answered in every point,—a monster he was,—dreadful, shapeless, huge, who had lost an eye. But why should *that* delight me? Had he been one of the Calendars in the Arabian Nights, and had paid down his eye as the price of his criminal curiosity, what right had *I* to exult in his misfortune? I did *not* exult; I delighted in no man’s punishment, though it were even merited. But these personal distinctions identified in an instant an old friend of mine, whom I had known in the South for some years as the most masterly of mail-coachmen. He was the man in all Europe that could best have undertaken to drive six-in-hand full gallop over *Al Sirat*,—that famous bridge of Mahomet across the bottomless gulf,—backing himself against the Prophet and twenty such fellows. I used to call him *Cyclops mastigophorus*, Cyclops the whip-bearer, until I observed that his skill made whips useless, except to fetch off an impudent fly from a leader’s head; upon which I changed his Grecian name to Cyclops *diphrelates* (Cyclops the charioteer). I, and others known to me, studied under him the diphrelic art. Excuse, reader, a word too elegant

to be pedantic. And also take this remark from me, as a *gage d'amitié*, that no word ever was or *can* be pedantic which, by supporting a distinction, supports the accuracy of logic ; or which fills up a chasm for the understanding. As a pupil, though I paid extra fees, I cannot say that I stood high in his esteem. It showed his dogged honesty (though, observe, not his discernment), that he could not see my merits. Perhaps we ought to excuse his absurdity in this particular by remembering his want of an eye. *That* made him blind to my merits. Irritating as this blindness was (surely it could not be envy !) he always courted my conversation, in which art I certainly had the whip-hand of him. On this occasion, great joy was at our meeting. But what was Cyclops doing here ? Had the medical men recommended northern air, or how ? I collected, from such explanations as he volunteered, that he had an interest at stake in a suit-at-law pending at Lancaster ; so that probably he had got himself transferred to this station, for the purpose of connecting with his professional pursuits an instant readiness for the calls of his lawsuit.

Meantime, what are we stopping for ? Surely, we 've been waiting long enough. O, this procrastinating mail, and O, this procrastinating post-office ! Can't they take a lesson upon that subject from *me* ? Some people have called *me* procrastinating. Now you are witness, reader, that I was in time for *them*. But can *they* lay their hands on their hearts, and say that they were in time for me ? I, during my life, have often had to wait for the post-office ; the post-office never waited a minute for me. What are they about ? The guard tells me that there is

a large extra accumulation of foreign mails this night, owing to irregularities caused by war and by the packet service, when as yet nothing is done by steam. For an *extra* hour, it seems, the post-office has been engaged in threshing out the pure wheaten correspondence of Glasgow, and winnowing it from the chaff of all baser intermediate towns. We can hear the flails going at this moment. But at last all is finished. Sound your horn, guard. Manchester, good by; we've lost an hour by your criminal conduct at the post-office; which, however, though I do not mean to part with a serviceable ground of complaint, and one which really *is* such for the horses, to me secretly is an advantage, since it compels us to recover this last hour amongst the next eight or nine. Off we are at last, and at eleven miles an hour; and at first I detect no changes in the energy or in the skill of Cyclops.

From Manchester to Kendal, which virtually (though not in law) is the capital of Westmoreland, were at this time seven stages of eleven miles each. The first five of these, dated from Manchester, terminated in Lancaster, which was therefore fifty-five miles north of Manchester, and the same distance exactly from Liverpool. The first three terminated in Preston (called, by way of distinction from other towns of that name, *proud* Preston), at which place it was that the separate roads from Liverpool and from Manchester to the north became confluent. Within these first three stages lay the foundation, the progress, and termination of our night's adventure. During the first stage, I found out that Cyclops was mortal: he was liable to the shocking affection of sleep, — a thing which

I had never previously suspected. If a man is addicted to the vicious habit of sleeping, all the skill in aurigation of Apollo himself, with the horses of Aurora to execute the motions of his will, avail him nothing. "O Cyclops!" I exclaimed more than once, "Cyclops, my friend; thou art mortal. Thou snorest." Through this first eleven miles, however, he betrayed his infirmity—which I grieve to say he shared with the whole Pagan Pantheon—only by short stretches. On waking up, he made an apology for himself, which, instead of mending the matter, laid an ominous foundation for coming disasters. The summer assizes were now proceeding at Lancaster: in consequence of which, for three nights and three days, he had not lain down in a bed. During the day, he was waiting for his uncertain summons as a witness on the trial in which he was interested; or he was drinking with the other witnesses, under the vigilant surveillance of the attorneys. During the night, or that part of it when the least temptations existed to conviviality, he was driving. Throughout the second stage he grew more and more drowsy. In the second mile of the third stage, he surrendered himself finally and without a struggle to his perilous temptation. All his past resistance had but deepened the weight of this final oppression. Seven atmospheres of sleep seemed resting upon him; and to consummate the case, our worthy guard, after singing "Love amongst the Roses" for the fiftieth or sixtieth time, without any invitation from Cyclops or me, and without applause for his poor labors, had moodily resigned himself to slumber,—not so deep doubtless as the coachman's, but deep enough for mischief, and hav-

ing, probably, no similar excuse. And thus at last, about ten miles from Preston, I found myself left in charge of his Majesty's London and Glasgow mail, then running about eleven miles an hour.

What made this negligence less criminal than else it must have been thought, was the condition of the roads at night during the assizes. At that time all the law business of populous Liverpool, and of populous Manchester, with its vast cincture of populous rural districts, was called up by ancient usage to the tribunal of Lilliputian Lancaster. To break up this old traditional usage required a conflict with powerful established interests, a large system of new arrangements, and a new parliamentary statute. As things were at present, twice in the year so vast a body of business rolled northwards, from the southern quarter of the county, that a fortnight at least occupied the severe exertions of two judges for its despatch. The consequence of this was, that every horse available for such a service, along the whole line of road, was exhausted in carrying down the multitudes of people who were parties to the different suits. By sunset, therefore, it usually happened that, through utter exhaustion amongst men and horses, the roads were all silent. Except exhaustion in the vast adjacent county of York from a contested election, nothing like it was ordinarily witnessed in England.

On this occasion, the usual silence and solitude prevailed along the road. Not a hoof nor a wheel was to be heard. And to strengthen this false luxurious confidence in the noiseless roads, it happened also that the night was one of peculiar solemnity and peace. I myself,

though slightly alive to the possibilities of peril, had so far yielded to the influence of the mighty calm as to sink into a profound reverie. The month was August, in which lay my own birthday; a festival, to every thoughtful man, suggesting solemn and often sigh-born thoughts. The county was my own native county,—upon which, in its southern section, more than upon any equal area known to man past or present, had descended the original curse of labor in its heaviest form, not mastering the bodies of men only as slaves, or criminals in mines, but working through the fiery will. Upon no equal space of earth was, or ever had been, the same energy of human power put forth daily. At this particular season also of the assizes, that dreadful hurricane of flight and pursuit, as it might have seemed to a stranger, that swept to and from Lancaster all day long, hunting the county up and down, and regularly subsiding about sunset, united with the permanent distinction of Lancashire as the very metropolis and citadel of labor, to point the thoughts pathetically upon that counter-vision of rest, of saintly repose from strife and sorrow, towards which, as to their secret haven, the profounder aspirations of man's heart are continually travelling. Obliquely we were nearing the sea upon our left, which also must, under the present circumstances, be repeating the general state of halcyon repose. The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore an orchestral part in this universal lull. Moonlight and the first timid tremblings of the dawn were now blending; and the blendings were brought into a still more exquisite state of unity by a slight silvery mist, motionless and dreamy, that covered the woods and fields, but with a

veil of equable transparency. Except the feet of our own horses, which, running on a sandy margin of the road, made little disturbance, there was no sound abroad. In the clouds and on the earth prevailed the same majestic peace ; and in spite of all that the villain of a school-master has done for the ruin of our sublimer thoughts, which are the thoughts of our infancy, we still believe in no such nonsense as a limited atmosphere. Whatever we may swear with our false feigning lips, in our faithful hearts we still believe, and must forever believe, in fields of air traversing the total gulf between earth and the central heavens. Still, in the confidence of children that tread without fear *every* chamber in their father's house, and to whom no door is closed, we, in that Sabbath vision which sometimes is revealed for an hour upon nights like this, ascend with easy steps from the sorrow-stricken fields of earth upwards to the sandals of God.

Suddenly from thoughts like these I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment ; I listened in awe ; but then it died away. Once roused, however, I could not but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion ; and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend to no presence of mind. On the contrary, my fear is, that I am miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and distraction hangs like some guilty weight of dark unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for *action*. But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have, as regards *thought*,

that in the first step towards the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution; in the radix I see too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion; in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence, I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. What could injure *us*? Our bulk and impetus charmed us against peril in any collision. And I had rode through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were matter of laughter as we looked back upon them, for any anxiety to rest upon *our* interests. The mail was not built. I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray *me* who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remarked this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. But then the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side; and two wrongs might make a right. *That* was not likely. The same motive which had drawn *us* to the right-hand side of the road, namely, the soft beaten sand, as contrasted with the paved centre, would prove attractive to others. Our lamps, still lighted, would give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us would rely upon *us* for quartering. All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw, not discursively or by effort, but as by one flash of horrid intuition.

Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which *might* be gathering ahead, ah, reader! what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of woe, seemed to steal upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was

heard! A whisper it was,—a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off,—secretly announcing a ruin that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable. What could be done— who was it that could do it — to check the storm-flight of these maniacal horses? What! could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman? You, reader, think that it would have been in *your* power to do so. And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But, from the way in which the coachman's hand was viced between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible. The guard subsequently found it impossible, after this danger had passed. Not the grasp only, but also the position of this Polyphemus, made the attempt impossible. You still think otherwise. See, then, that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Or stay, reader, unhorse me that marble emperor: knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now too clearly the sounds of wheels. Who and what could it be? Was it industry in a taxed cart? Was it youthful gayety in a gig? Whoever it was, something must be attempted to warn them. Upon the other party rests the active responsibility, but upon *us*—and, woe is me! that *us* was my single self—rests the responsibility of warning. Yet, how should this be accomplished? Might I not seize the guard's horn? Already, on the first thought, I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat. But this, from the foreign mail's being

piled upon the roof, was a difficult and even dangerous attempt, to one cramped by nearly three hundred miles of outside travelling. And, fortunately, before I had lost much time in the attempt, our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road, which opened upon us the stage where the collision must be accomplished, the parties that seemed summoned to the trial, and the impossibility of saving them by any communication with the guard.

Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred yards, perhaps, in length; and the umbrageous trees, which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the early light; but there was still light enough to perceive, at the farther end of this Gothic aisle, a light, reedy gig, in which were seated a young man, and, by his side, a young lady. Ah, young sir! what are you about? If it is necessary that you should whisper your communications to this young lady,—though really I see nobody at this hour, and on this solitary road, likely to overhear your conversation,—is it, therefore, necessary that you should carry your lips forward to hers? The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour; and the parties within it, being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a half. What is it that I shall do? Strange it is, and, to a mere auditor of the tale, might seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the *Iliad* to prompt the sole recourse that remained. But so it was. Suddenly

I remembered the shout of Achilles, and its effect. But could I pretend to shout like the son of Peleus, aided by Pallas? No, certainly: but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant; a shout would suffice, such as should carry terror into the hearts of two thoughtless young people, and one gig horse. I shouted,—and the young man heard me not. A second time I shouted,—and now he heard me, for now he raised his head.

Here, then, all had been done that, by me, *could* be done: more on *my* part was not possible. Mine had been the first step: the second was for the young man: the third was for God. If, said I, the stranger is a brave man, and if, indeed, he loves the young girl at his side,—or, loving her not, if he feels the obligation pressing upon every man worthy to be called a man, of doing his utmost for a woman confided to his protection,—he will at least make some effort to save her. If *that* fails, he will not perish the more, or by a death more cruel, for having made it; and he will die as a brave man should, with his face to the danger, and with his arm about the woman that he sought in vain to save. But if he makes no effort, shrinking, without a struggle, from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for this baseness of poltroonery. He will die no less: and why not? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world? No; *let* him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl, who now, upon the least shadow of failure in *him*, must, by the fiercest of translations,—must, without time for

a prayer,— must, within seventy seconds, stand before the judgment-seat of God.

But craven he was not : sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended, the ruin that was coming down : already its gloomy shadow darkened above him ; and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah ! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a day : ah ! what a sublime thing does courage seem, when some fearful crisis on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some mountainous wave, from which, accordingly as he chooses his course, he describes two courses, and a voice says to him audibly, “This way lies hope ; take the other way and mourn forever !” Yet, even then, amidst the raving of the seas and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation,— is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek all his counsel from *him* ! For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to search and value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds more he sat immovably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five he sat with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow, under some extremity of doubt, for wisdom to guide him towards the better choice. Then suddenly he rose ; stood upright ; and, by a sudden strain upon the reins, raising his horse’s forefeet from the ground, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hind legs, so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right an-

gles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved ; except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. If no more were done, nothing was done ; for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet even now it may not be too late : fifteen of the twenty seconds may still be unexhausted ; and one almighty bound forward may avail to clear the ground. Hurry then, hurry ! for the flying moments — *they* hurry ! O, hurry, hurry, my brave young man ! for the cruel hoofs of our horses — *they* also hurry ! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. Fear not for *him*, if human energy can suffice : faithful was he that drove, to his terrific duty ; faithful was the horse to *his* command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's forefeet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger half of the little equipage had then cleared our over-towering shadow : *that* was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should float off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished were embarked the human freightage. The rear part of the carriage — was *that* certainly beyond the line of absolute ruin ? What power could answer the question ? Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer, and divide the one from the other ? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more indivisibly, than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. *That* must

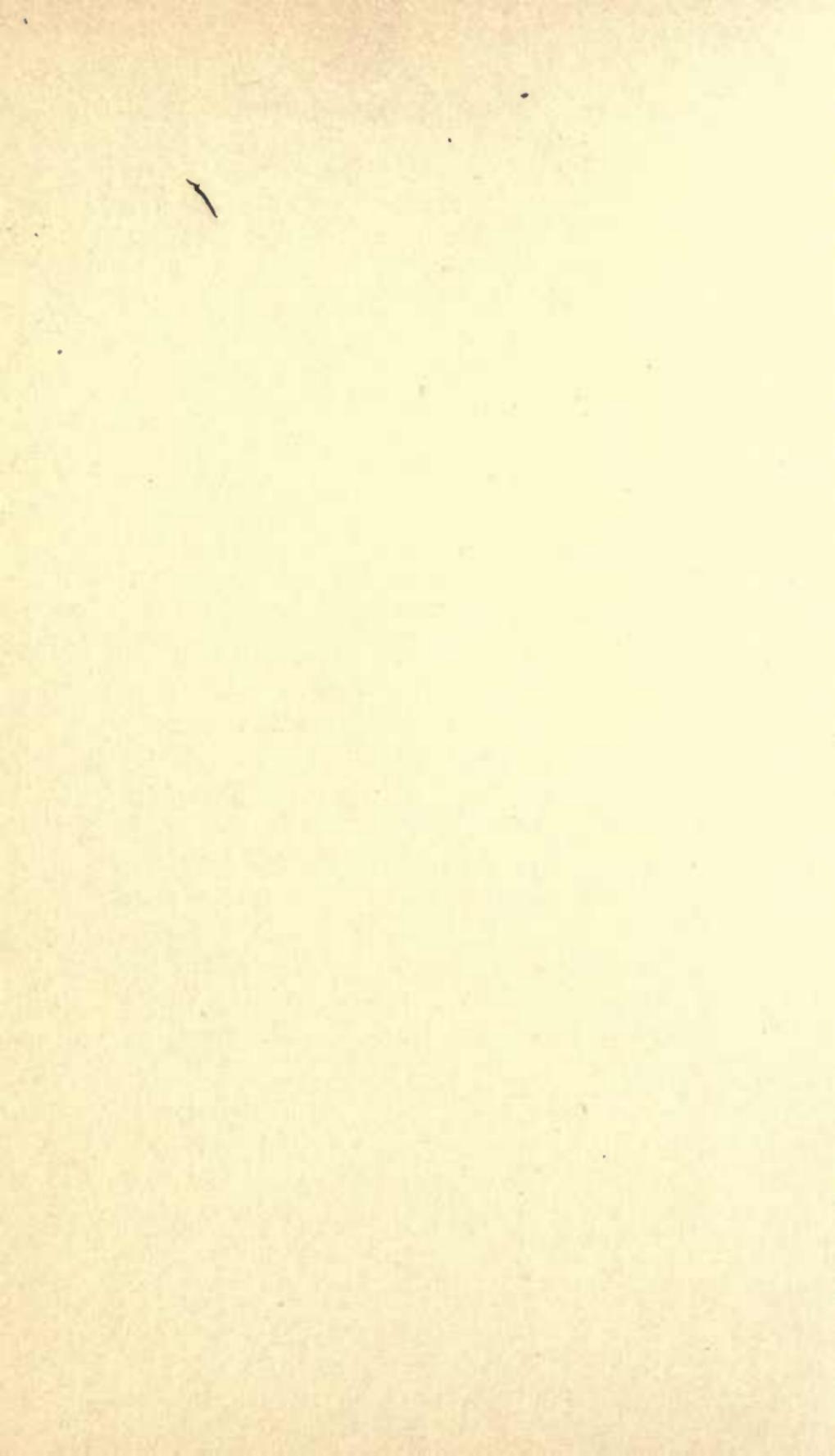
the young man have felt too plainly. His back was now turned to us ; not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril ; but by the dreadful rattle of our harness, too truly had his ear been instructed, — that all was finished as regarded any further effort of *his*. Already in resignation he had rested from his struggle ; and perhaps in his heart he was whispering, “Father, which art above, do thou finish in heaven what I on earth have attempted.” We ran past them faster than ever mill-race in our inexorable flight. O, raving of hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit ! Either with the swing-bar, or with the haunch of our near leader, we had struck the off-wheel of the little gig, which stood rather obliquely and not quite so far advanced as to be accurately parallel with the near wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror, to look upon the ruins we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its tale, and wrote all its records on my heart forever.

The horse was planted immovably, with his forefeet upon the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party was alone untouched by the passion of death. The little cany carriage, — partly perhaps from the dreadful torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the thundering blow we had given to it, — as if it sympathized with human horror, was all alive with tremblings and shiverings. The young man sat like a rock. He stirred not at all. But *his* was the steadiness of agitation frozen into rest by horror. As yet he dared

not to look round ; for he knew that if anything remained to do, by him it could no longer be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if their safety were accomplished. But the lady —

But the lady,—O heavens ! will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing ! Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case ; suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of the unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night,—from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight,—from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love,—suddenly as from the woods and fields,—suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation,—suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered. In the twinkling of an eye our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle ; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction ; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams forever.



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